INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM IN AMERICA

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SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY, IN THE FACULTY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

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PREFACE

In this study the author has assumed on the part of readers some knowledge of the numerous reasons for the existence of the labor movement, and has not sought to justify or condemn the fact of organization among the workers. Instead, an attempt has been made to describe and evaluate one type of unionism, with its many variations, and to consider the direction in which organized labor seems to be moving. Thanks are due to the officials of the different unions described for the valuable information which they have furnished in personal interviews and by correspondence; to Mr. Robert Dunn for helpful criticism; to Professor Henry R. Seager and Professor Samuel McCune Lindsay, of Columbia University, for their careful reading of the manuscript and many useful suggestions; and to many other students of the labor movement for additional light upon the subject.

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New York,
April 1, 1922.

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Industrial Unionism in America

INTRODUCTION

What Industrial Unionism Is

To the average person the term "industrial union" means little. To some it is synonymous with "trade union"; to others it suggests the Industrial Workers of the World and arouses the hostility which is the usual reaction to any mention of that organization. If industrial unionism is not identical with either of these, what then is it? Broadly speaking, the industrial union differs from other unions in that it includes all who work in an industry, skilled and unskilled, regardless of differences in craft, sex, or race. Whereas the craft union seeks to unite those using the same tools or doing the same kind of work with approximately the same degree of skill, the industrial union seeks to unite all who are engaged upon a certain product or class of products, regardless of the character of the service which they render. In the case of the railroad industry, the word "product" would be interpreted as meaning the service of transportaton; and an industrial union in that field would include all who are in any way connected with the running of trains, the maintenance of the tracks in good condition, telegraphing and signaling, and all other work in connection with the railroads. One of the strongest of our industrial unions, the United Mine Workers, includes all working in and around the mines, whether they be teamsters, firemen, blacksmiths, car dumpers, slate pickers, miners, or men engaged in various other occupations connected with the industry. It is difficult to draw hard-and-fast lines between the craft and the industrial union, for as will be noted in the following

chapter there are many intermediate steps between them, and the majority of the unions in this country are not pure representatives of either type. Nevertheless it is worth while to make plain what the two types are, and what the forces tending toward one or the other form of organization may be.

The Spirit of Industrial Unionism

If the difference between them was merely one of structure we might dismiss the matter as one of little interest for the general public, but the difference in spirit and philosophy is usually quite as great as that in form of organization. It is this difference in spirit and general outlook which is the significant thing about industrial unionism. Including as it does all types of workers, from the common laborer to the most highly skilled craftsman, the industrial union is based on the conception of the solidarity of labor, or at least of that portion of it which is in one particular industry. Instead of emphasizing the divisions among the workers and fostering a narrow interest in the affairs of the craft regardless of those of the industry as a whole, it lays stress on the mutual dependence of the skilled and the unskilled and the necessity of subordinating the interests of a small group to those of the whole body of workers. Not only is loyalty to fellow-workers in the same industry emphasized, but also loyalty to the whole working class in its struggle against the capitalist system. Although there are a few industrial unions in this country which have little of this class consciousness, the majority of them are distinctly hoping for the abolition of the capitalist system and the ultimate control of industry by the workers themselves. In some cases the conception of how this is to be brought about is very vague; in others there

is a fairly clear-cut theory as to how the change in the industrial order is to come. Budish and Soule in a recent book called *The New Unionism* state that the essential difference between unions is that between those which are "unconscious that their efforts tend toward a new social order, and so adapt their strategy solely toward the immediate situation, and unions which are conscious of their desire for a new order and so base their strategy on more fundamental considerations." [1] The latter type they call the "new unionism." This term, though frequently used, is somewhat misleading, as unions which looked forward to a new industrial order and sought to unite the skilled and the unskilled, sprang up very early in the labor movement of both England and America; but it may serve for lack of a better one. The strategy of the various unions which are conscious of their desire for a new order is not always determined by this ultimate aim, but nevertheless there is a real difference between organizations which do not look beyond the securing of immediate advantages for their members, and those which are definitely expecting the day when industry shall be owned and run by the workers. Although it is not strictly accurate to identify industrial unionism with this "new unionism," such a large proportion of industrial unions have this hope that the few which are without it may be considered industrial in structure but not in spirit.

Industrial Unionism in England—Its Rise

The development of industrial unionism in England has been so significant that we cannot refrain from considering it briefly before turning to conditions in America. The formation of the Triple Alliance by the Miners' Federation, the National Union of Railwaymen, and the

[1] Budish and Soule, *The New Unionism* (New York, 1920), p. 10.

National Transport Workers' Federation in 1914, the program for nationalization of mines and railroads, and the threat of a general strike in support of the miners in the spring of 1921, have stirred the imagination of thousands in this country and elsewhere. Without some knowledge of the rapid progress of events in the labor movement across the water, we cannot hope to understand the various currents in the labor world of America.

The first significant expression in England of the spirit of industrial unionism and the aspiration of the workers for the control of industry was in the wave of revolutionary communism which swept the country in 1833-34 under the inspiration of Robert Owen. The Grand Consolidated Trade Union formed at that time recruited masses of the unskilled as well as of the skilled, and within a few weeks had half a million members from many different industries.[2] The amazing growth of the movement and its revolutionary hopes terrified the government and the employing class, and roused such opposition that in only a few months the whole thing had collapsed. The ideals of the movement lingered on for a time, but after the decline of Chartism, British trade unions settled down to seek very limited ends, tacitly accepting the existing organization of industry and being content to include only the skilled workers in their ranks. A new movement among the unskilled occurred in the late eighties and resulted in the great dock strike of 1889, which under the leadership of Tom Mann and John Burns paralyzed the port of London for over four weeks. The decided victory which was finally won led to the formation of a large number of unions among unskilled laborers, and the opening of the doors of many old unions to them. This "new unionism," as it was

[2] Webb, *History of Trade Unionism* (London, 1920), p. 135.

then christened, was distinctly class conscious and vaguely Socialistic in its aims. It did not seek to overthrow existing organizations, however, but to sweep into them great masses of hitherto unorganized workers and break down the selfish spirit of exclusiveness which dominated them.[3] Although in the succeeding depression large numbers of the unskilled fell away from the unions, the new spirit of solidarity remained.

The Transport Workers and Railwaymen

The development of industrial unionism in England has been chiefly by means of the drawing together of different craft unions into larger units, rather than by building up competing unions on an industrial basis. The movement toward federation or amalgamation of all the craft bodies in an industry has been very strong in the last decade, due partly to the influence of Guild Socialists and similar groups, who are in favor of industrial unionism not so much for its immediate advantages, as because they believe that only in this form can unions express the aspirations of the workers for the control of industry. The mining, railroad, transport, and engineering industries furnish the best illustrations of the process that is going on. The National Transport Workers' Federation, which was formed in 1911 after the great dockers' strike of that year, unites numerous bodies of seamen, coal porters, lighters, dockers, carmen, stevedores, and other workers in waterside transport work. The National Union of Railwaymen was formed in 1913 by a merging of three of the principal railroad unions which had acted together in the strike of 1911. The Railway Clerks' Association works in harmony with this organization, although it has not yet joined it. A

[3] Webb, *op. cit.*, p. 418.

third body, the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, has hampered the National Union somewhat, although it cooperated with it in the great railroad strike of 1919. The strike, in which half a million men went out and disorganized the railroad service of the country for nine days, was settled through the mediation of the other members of the Triple Alliance. The aim of the National Union of Railwaymen is to secure a complete organization of all connected with the railroads in any way, including not merely those working on the trains but also the mechanics in the workshops; cooks, waiters, and housemaids employed at railroad hotels; sailors and firemen on board the steamers owned by the railroads; compositors, lithographers, and bookbinders employed in printing tickets and timetables; and even the men whom one of the largest companies keeps in constant employment manufacturing crutches and wooden legs for disabled members of the staff.[4] This has brought the organization into conflict with many craft unions, and the problems of jurisdiction have not yet been settled. The membership of the union was said to be about 450,000 in 1920.[5] For years it has advocated nationalization of the railroads and direct participation in the management of them by the workers.

The Miners' Federation

The third member of the famous Triple Alliance, the Miners' Federation, had a membership of about 900,000 in 1920.[6] It was established in 1888, and since then has gradually absorbed all the district associations of coal hewers and other underground workers, and some of the organizations of enginemen, firemen, mine mechanics,

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[4] Webb, *op. cit.*, p. 532.
[5] Gleason, *What the Workers Want* (New York, 1920), p. 212.
[6] Webb, *op. cit.*, p. 549.

colliery clerks, cokemen, and other workers employed in or about the mines. There were still about forty small independent unions of men about the mines in 1920, however, and some of these had formed a National Council of Colliery Workers Other than Miners for the purpose of maintaining a separate existence. As its name suggests, the Miners' Federation is only a federation of autonomous district associations, yet it has been very successful in centralizing the general policy of the whole mining industry, through a strong Executive Committee and frequent conferences. It has for several years been working vigorously for the nationalization of the mines, and has presented a detailed scheme for their administration by means of a mining council, district councils, and pit committees, all of which are to be composed of an equal number of miners and of technical experts. A general strike to enforce this and other demands was averted in 1919 only by the appointment of a government Commission to investigate the industry and make recommendations in regard to it. The hearings held by the Commission, which included three miners and three economists appointed by the miners as well as six representatives of capital, brought forth many sensational facts in regard to the inefficiency of the management of the industry under private hands, and the large profits made by the most advantageously situated mines. The final report presented by Justice Sankey, chairman of the Commission, and supported in general by the six representatives of the miners, declared for the nationalization of the mines and a system of control in which the workers were to have a large share.

Coal Strike of 1921

Although the miners claim that Lloyd George had promised beforehand that the recommendations of the

Commission would be carried out by the government, which was still directing the mines under its war powers, these recommendations were not adopted, but certain compromises were offered instead. The miners have continued to be dissatisfied in spite of the wage concessions granted at that time, and those which followed the brief strike of 1920. When the government gave up its control of the mines on March 31, 1921, thereby putting an end to the system of regulating wages on a national rather than a district basis, and the system of pooling the profits by which the poorer mines had been able to keep going by sharing the profits of the richer ones, the trouble broke out anew and a strike of all the miners in the country was called. Although the immediate demands were for the maintenance of a national standard of wages which would be adequate for decent living, and the continuance of the national pooling of profits, it was understood that this was only a step toward the nationalization which was desired by the miners. The other members of the Triple Alliance, and some other labor groups, voted to join in a general strike in support of the miners, and for a few days it looked as if this powerful coalition was about to put all industry in England at a standstill. The day before the railroad and transport workers were to go out, however, the miners' spokesman, Frank Hodges, expressed willingness to postpone consideration of the national standard of wages and pooling of profits if a temporary wage agreement might be reached. This proposal was at once repudiated by the other members of the Miners' Executive, but the difference of opinion undermined the determination of the allied unions to support the miners, and as a result the general strike order was canceled. This cancellation aroused much indignation on the part of certain groups of railroad and

transport workers, especially in South Wales, and much resentment among the miners.

The breakdown of the Triple Alliance at its first crucial test was a bitter disappointment to those who had seen in it the greatest sign of working class solidarity yet found in the labor movement. Nevertheless, the unwillingness of the railroad and transport workers to enter into a pitched battle with the forces of government at this time—for that is what it would have meant—over an issue which did not affect them very directly, does not mean that all prospect of united action by these three groups in the future is lost. In fact, not long after the decision to call off the general strike, the executives of both the railwaymen and the transport workers were reported to have given instructions against handling any coal from overseas, or moving coal trucks from colliery sidings, thus showing that they had not wholly repudiated the stand taken by the miners. The strike finally ended in a compromise after three months of effort on the part of the government to bring about a settlement, and the men went back to work under a scheme of profit-sharing and a government subsidy of 10,000,000 pounds, but without the national pooling of profits which they had sought, or any plan for permanent government control.

Engineering Trades and Shop Stewards

Another instance of the development of industrial unionism is seen in the engineering trades in England. The Amalgamated Society of Engineers in 1912 decided to reach out to the vast numbers of semi-skilled men who had entered the industry, and admit practically all workers in the engineering shops into the union. Due to the opposition of many of its branches, this decision was reversed in 1915, but nevertheless the movement in favor

of a wider organization continued. In 1920 six of the unions in the industry joined with the Amalgamated Society in forming the Amalgamated Engineering Union, with a membership of 400,000; and several other engineering groups were considering affiliation.[7]

It is in this industry that the shop stewards movement first developed in 1915, because of discontent with the executive officers of the unions and their rigid craft policy. In some cases minor union officials who were known as stewards greatly enlarged their functions; in others new stewards were elected regardless of craft or union affiliation. Workshop committees were made up of the stewards elected by different departments, and these sent delegates to the general workers' committees, which sprang up first on the Clyde and then appeared in many other places. Starting with the engineering and metal trades, these workers' committees expanded to include building workers, miners, tramway workers, railwaymen, and various others. About twenty such committees in England have been coordinated in a national organization, and about a dozen in Scotland.[8] They have come into conflict with the regular trade unions, which have tried to bring the stewards under official control, and have suffered somewhat from their opposition, as might be expected. No final settlement of the controversy has yet been reached. The Webbs call the shop stewards movement "a ferment rather than a statistically important element in the trade union world"; yet as an indication of a tendency it is decidedly significant.[9] The principles underlying the movement are the control of policy and action by the rank and file in the workshop, and the

[7] Webb, *op. cit.*, p. 487.
[8] Gleason, *op. cit.*, p. 199, chapter by J. T. Murphy on Shop Stewards.
[9] Webb, *op. cit.*, p. 659, note.

uniting of all kinds of workers on an industrial rather than a craft basis. It aims at a greatly increased share in the management of industry through the organization of the whole working class, until the complete triumph of the workers is assured. The leaders of the movement are proposing the forming of district and national councils in each industry, and also general councils to include representatives of all industries. A recent step taken by the organization was to affiliate loosely with the Industrial Workers of the World in America.

Groups for Syndicalist Propaganda

Many of the leaders in the shop stewards movement are also moving spirits in the Socialist Labor Party of Great Britain, which has been preaching industrial unionism for years and has been especially influential in the Clyde district and in South Wales. Through the influence of the party, various experiments in industrial unionism have been made and groups for vigorous propaganda organized. In 1910, Tom Mann, who had become prominent in the dockers' strike of 1889, returned from a visit to France and began to preach the syndicalist ideas which he had absorbed over there, saying that the workers must organize industrially and take over the entire responsibility of running industry. He helped organize the Industrial Workers of Great Britain, later known as the Workers' International Industrial Union, which like the American I.W.W. intended to be an all-embracing union of the working class. It never secured more than 4,000 members, however.[10] The British working class have not responded to any extent to the attempt to build up radical industrial unions as rivals to the well-established trade organizations. Even Tom Mann himself has de-

[10] Gleason, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

cided that the only way to spread industrial unionism is to work through the old craft bodies and endeavor to amalgamate them, and has accordingly become president of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers. As has already been noted, the progress which has been made in this direction, and the increasing demand for workers' control of industry on the part of the strongest amalgamations, is very marked.

The Knights of Labor—Origin and Structure

Turning back to America we must consider first the Noble Order of the Knights of Labor which arose in Philadelphia in 1869. Although it is not our purpose to describe in detail the various industrial unions which have arisen and then died down again, the historical importance of the Knights of Labor is so great that we cannot go on to speak of the unions which are functioning at the present time without some mention of this organization which represents a distinct type in the labor movement. It was an outgrowth of a union of garment cutters, which decided to open its doors to other workers. Workers of other trades were admitted at first as associate members, but when they were familiar with the aims of the society they were allowed to form affiliated groups known as "assemblies" in their own trades. The second assembly was organized of ship carpenters, and the third of shawl weavers. The growth of the Order was steady, and by the close of 1876 there were over one hundred such assemblies. Besides these trade groups, many mixed assemblies of different kinds of workers were organized, and some separate ones for negroes. In 1873 the first district assembly, uniting thirty-one locals, was formed; and in 1878 a national organization known as the General Assembly, with delegates from seven states and fifteen

trades, came into being.[11] The district assemblies were chiefly of mixed workers in the earlier years. An increasing demand on the part of the skilled workers to separate from the mixed district assemblies, which seemed too broad in their sympathies, caused the authorization of national trade assemblies in 1884 to further the interests of the separate crafts. Such national trade groups had been strictly forbidden before this, and were still discouraged for some time, as they seemed to be contrary to the all-inclusive spirit of the organization.[12] All of them were subordinate to the General Assembly, which had a large degree of power.

Ideals and Aims

The aim of Uriah Stevens, the founder of the Order, was to include all branches of workers, skilled and unskilled, in one great brotherhood whose watchword was, "an injury to one is the concern of all." The ideals and purposes of the Knights were very high. They looked forward to the end of the wage system, but nevertheless declared that they had no conflict with legitimate enterprise or necessary capital. They hoped to bring about a better state of society by means of the federation of all productive labor, in order to promote cooperation and political action for the benefit of the workers. All separate craft interests were to be subordinated to the welfare of the whole, and all were to work together in building a new social order. Not only manual workers, but people of widely differing ranks were included. In fact, only lawyers, bankers, professional gamblers, stock-brokers, and those who dealt in intoxicating liquors

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[11] Groat, *Organized Labor in America* (New York, 1916), p. 75.

[12] Commons and Associates, *History of Labor in the United States*, Vol. 21 (New York, 1918), p. 427.

were definitely excluded, though a later regulation stated that at least three-quarters of the members of new locals must be of the wage-earning class. Although aiming to draw in all grades of workers, in reality the Order reached largely the semi-skilled workmen and machine operators who were not reached by other unions. This was especially true during the depression in 1884-85 when multitudes of semi-skilled and unskilled workers, who were seriously affected by unemployment and wage reductions, were drawn into the movement. With this new influx, it has been said, the idea of solidarity of labor ceased to be a mere form of words and became vital.[13]

Growth and Decline

For a time the prospects of the Knights of Labor seemed very brilliant. Its growth up to 1886, especially after it gave up its policy of secrecy, was unprecedented. During that year its membership increased from 15,000 to 700,000.[14] After that it lost its hold on the unskilled workers, and began to decline. Its strenuous efforts to absorb the existing trade unions of skilled workers, in order that they might help in uplifting others, failed to succeed, and even the semi-skilled themselves steadily drifted into the American Federation of Labor. The organization continued to decline till it became largely an association of country people—mechanics, small merchants, and farmers, with a decidedly middle class philosophy.

Causes of Decline

Various causes for this decline have been given. For one thing, the experiments in cooperation which were entered into proved disappointing, and many failures

[13] Commons and Associates, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 357.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 413.

occurred due to lack of business experience, opposition of capitalists who viewed the movement with hostility, jealousies and suspicion of the managers on the part of the rank and file and various other causes. Many such cooperative ventures were started by the Order—fifty-four cooperative workshops and factories and eleven newspapers were reported in 1887—and the financial loss due to the numerous failures was very heavy.[15] The political activity carried on by the Knights was also a source of internal dissension and helped to dissipate the energies of the organization. Many municipal elections were won by the candidates of the Knights, and in 1888 the Order was on the point of taking an active part in the national campaign but was restrained by its general officers. Education in political principles was carried on in all assemblies with the aim of creating political as well as industrial solidarity. Definite action in politics could not be taken by any assembly unless three-fourths of the attending members supported it, and no members were compelled to vote with the majority, but nevertheless internal conflicts did result from activities along this line.

Another cause for decline was the large number of disastrous strikes which occurred. In its earlier years the Order had definitely opposed strikes, but the sentiment in favor of them grew so that many took place between 1878 and 1883. The majority of these failed, due partly to the presence of a large number of unskilled members who had no experience in united action, and partly to an inherent weakness in the form of organization. The mixed assemblies could not maintain the same discipline in strikes carried on by members of a single trade that a closely knit trade union could maintain. After 1883

[15] Hollander and Barnett, *Studies in American Trade Unionism* (New York, 1907), "The Knights of Labor," by Wm. Kirk, p. 367.

opposition to strikes was again voiced, but nevertheless there were some very serious sympathetic ones between 1886 and 1888 which proved disastrous to the organization. Overcentralization and autocratic power on the part of the general officers also contributed to the feeling of restlessness and dissatisfaction which caused a gradual process of secession from the Order; and the dual form of organization was a constant source of friction between craft and mixed groups.

Most important of all, however, was the breakdown of the feeling of solidarity and community of interest among the different types of workers. This breakdown seemed to many an indication that it was impossible to unite the skilled and the unskilled, and that all attempts to build up an organization combining different crafts were Utopian. A truer interpretation of the facts, however, is that it was due to the methods used in trying to foster the ideas of solidarity. The mixed assemblies were not based on any real industrial interests, and the vague ideals of brotherhood expressed by the Order were not powerful enough among the rank and file to weld workers from very diverse industries into effective groups for immediate action. Although frequently cited as an example of the failure of industrial unionism, the Knights of Labor was in reality organized more on a class basis than on an industrial one—using the term "class" in a sense broad enough to include some who worked with their brains as well as those who worked with their hands. We must turn to more recent experiments for light on the effectiveness of the industrial form of organization.

Organization of the A. F. of L. on Craft Basis

The experience of the Knights of Labor was an important factor in determining the policy of the Ameri-

can Federation of Labor, which was formed under the name of the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions in 1881. Believing that a sense of solidarity between people doing different kinds of work and having different problems was very hard to obtain, and that skilled workers could get better conditions for themselves, and hence further the whole labor movement more effectively, by uniting simply with others of their own craft, the A. F. of L. has been built on the basis of craft independence. The powerful unions which have affiliated with it are for the most part organized along craft lines, and have direct control over their own trade interests without interference. In this way the skilled workers have improved their condition more rapidly than if they had been obliged to concern themselves with the problems of those who were less skilled, and to subordinate their interests to those of the whole body of workers in an industry. In certain trades where men change often from one industry to another, the tie uniting those of the same craft has seemed much stronger than that uniting those who work on the same product. The marked success which the Federation has had, and its steady growth in power and influence, indicate that this policy of craft independence was a wise one at the time when it was adopted.

Disadvantages of the Craft Basis

Certain disadvantages in this method have become increasingly apparent with the development of industry, however, and have strengthened the movement in favor of a different form of organization. Those who advocate organizing on an industrial rather than a craft basis point to the distressingly frequent disputes between different craft unions as to the kind of work over which each has jurisdiction. Such disputes may arise because

of a change in the technique of industry, making a different kind of skill necessary for a particular piece of work; because of new subdivisions in processes; because of the introduction of new materials; or for various other reasons. Uniting all of the crafts in an industry would eliminate much of this jurisdictional difficulty. Furthermore, modern industrial methods are rapidly wiping out craft lines and making old divisions inexpedient. The introduction of new machinery is breaking down craftsmanship, and reducing the skilled worker to the level of the unskilled. Hence men may shift from one occupation to another much more easily than before, and those with little training can compete successfully with those of long years of apprenticeship. The new machinery is displacing not only the skilled workers but also many of the unskilled, in certain industries, and making a more homogeneous force of semi-skilled workers. When members of one trade union have a grievance, the employer can thus secure workers from another trade, very often, to take the places of those on strike.

Under the craft form of organization, say the industrial unionists, employers repeatedly play one craft off against another, in order to prevent united action. If time contracts are made with the different groups in their employ, the dates for expiration of such contracts are fixed at different times, so that no concerted move for better working conditions can be made. The employer may force one group to accept certain conditions and then use that acceptance as a precedent for forcing similar conditions on other groups one by one; or he may make concessions to a strategic group in order to prevent its protesting against reductions in the privileges of other groups. In case of a strike on the part of one

craft, those who remain at work may instruct "scabs" how to do the work of the strikers. This happened many times upon the railroads before the recent move for co-operation. Employers in some cases succeed in having the work of the striking departments done for them by outside firms, and in this way keep their establishments running and their other workers busy. If all those working in a factory belong to one union, such tactics are made impossible. In time of strike there is much less chance of replacing the workers and keeping the plant running if the whole labor force goes out together, than if only a small group throws down its tools. This is particularly true in the case of semi-skilled or unskilled workers. On the other hand, if the members of a highly skilled craft union cannot be replaced, a very small group may succeed in shutting down the whole establishment and throwing thousands out of work without consulting the mass of the workers, in order to gain some trivial advantage for themselves. Action of this sort arouses resentment on the part of those who are not to benefit from it, although forced without their consent to bear a large part of the burden of it. If all belonged to the same union, a minority could not thus close down a plant against the will of the majority.

Further Arguments for Industrial Unionism

Advocates of industrial unionism not only point out these indications of what they call the ineffectiveness of craft unionism in dealing with a single employer, but also emphasizes the helplessness of the craft union in the struggle against the gigantic combinations of capital which have grown up in recent years. In order to be efficient, labor must present a front coextensive with the employers' association, and hence must develop a union structure

which corresponds to the prevailing system of organization in industry. This they say is necessary for successful immediate action and also as a preparation for the time when the workers are to take complete control of the processes of production. As long as the workers remain split up in separate craft groups, little interest will be felt in the problem of the industry as a whole. It is necessary to have an organization in which every wage-earner in the industry is included, from the lowest skilled to the highest, if the workers are to be prepared for a greater measure of industrial democracy. The craft unions are to a great extent made up of skilled workers, whereas the great mass of the unskilled have hardly been touched by them. In some unions, high initiation fees and long apprenticeship periods tend to keep out many who might otherwise join, and hence the number of unorganized is unnecessarily large. If the labor movement is to become the power that it should become, the industrialists say, a form of organization must be adopted in every industry which will include every worker in it. This is necessary not only for the sake of the unskilled, but for the sake of the whole body of workers.

Types of Industrial Unionism in the United States

For these reasons there is a decided tendency toward industrial unionism both within the American Federation of Labor and outside it. In the *History of Labor in the United States,* edited by Professor Commons, three types of industrial unionism existing in the country at the present time are distinguished.[16] The first is that of the unskilled and migratory workers, who conceive of it as "one big union," including workers of all industries. This class, which found hope in the Knights of

[16] Commons and Associates, *op. cit.,* Vol. 2, pp. 533-35.

Labor in the eighties to some extent, is now represented by the Industrial Workers of the World which was organized in 1905. It is a strongly class conscious group, believing in assault rather than in agreements with employers, and having little faith in political action. Its power is spectacular rather than continuous, as its members have little experience in organization. The second type is that of the middle stratum of the A. F. of L., trades which are moderately skilled and have had considerable experience in organization. The coal miners, the metal miners, and the brewery workers are illustrations of this type. These believe that "one big union" would be undesirable, for the present, at any rate, but seek to organize all workers in their respective industries. Their methods are opportunist, and unlike the I.W.W., they believe firmly in trade agreements with their employers. As their position is near enough to that of the unskilled to make them alive to the dangers of competition from them unless these workers are organized, they have been glad to include the unskilled in their unions, but their industrialism has been caused more by conditions in their respective industries than by any special theories. There is a decided Socialist element in these groups, but it is not always in control. Similar to these in many respects are the industrial unions in the garment and textile industries and several other trades, which are independent of the A. F. of L. The third type is that of the upper stratum of skilled trades in the A. F. of L. It is represented by the various departments made up of related trades, which have been formed for the solution of jurisdictional difficulties and cooperation along various lines. It would be more accurate to call this an indication of the tendency toward industrial unionism than an example of it, however, for the unions in the different trades

retain their autonomy and function independently in most matters.

In this study the industrial unions of the country have been grouped somewhat differently. Part One will consider the organizations within the A. F. of L. which have the industrial form, and those which show a tendency toward it; Part Two the more revolutionary industrial unions which seek to include all industries within one organization; and Part Three the industrial unions which have not affiliated with either the A. F. of L. or the I. W. W. or any other all-inclusive body, but have remained independent. This division has not been strictly adhered to, as it has seemed wiser to treat the industrial unions which the A. F. of L. has in the needle and garment trades, in the same section with the independent unions in those trades, but in general the classification holds. The aim of the book is not to dwell upon the historical aspects of the subject, except in so far as is necessary to understand the present situation, but to describe the different industrial unions which are functioning today and draw some general conclusions as to the direction in which the labor movement is likely to develop in the future.

PART I

INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM WITHIN THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

CHAPTER I

TENDENCIES TOWARD INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM IN THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

A. F. of L. and Industrial Unionism

Although the traditional policy of the A. F. of L., as has been pointed out, is in favor of craft rather than industrial unionism, there are not only certain fully developed industrial unions within its fold, but also many others which show a decided tendency in that direction. The official position of the A. F. of L. on the subject is stated in the so-called "Autonomy Declaration" which was adopted by the annual convention in 1901 and reaffirmed in 1912. This Declaration recognized the impossibility of drawing hard-and-fast lines between crafts but stated that the principle of autonomy must be maintained as far as is "consistent with the varying phrases and transitions in industry." It went on to say:

> As the magnificent growth of the A. F. of L. is conceded by all students of economic thought to be the result of organization on trade lines, and believing it neither necessary nor expedient to make any radical departure from this fundamental principle, we declare that as a general proposition the interests of the workers will be best conserved by adhering as closely to that doctrine as the recent great changes in methods of production and employment make practicable. However, owing to the isolation of some industries from thickly populated centres where the overwhelming number follow one branch thereof, and owing to the fact that in some industries comparatively few workers are engaged over whom separate organizations claim jurisdiction, we

believe that jurisdiction in such industries by the paramount organization would yield the best results to the workers therein, at least until the development of organization has reached a stage wherein these may be placed, without material injury to all parties in interest, in affiliation with their national trade unions. . . . We hold that the interests of the trade union movement will be promoted by closely allying the sub-divided crafts, giving consideration to amalgamation and to organization of District and National Trade Councils to which should be referred questions in dispute, and which should be adjusted within allied craft lines.

The Executive Council in reiterating this Declaration in 1912 repudiated the insinuation of the Industrial Workers of the World that trade unions are rigid and do not adjust themselves to meet new conditions, and pointed out the large number of amalgamations which have taken place among the A. F. of L. unions, and the fine spirit of cooperation shown by them. Nevertheless the Federation has consistently voted down all resolutions endorsing industrial unionism when they have been introduced. Such a resolution was introduced by delegates of the United Mine Workers at the 1912 convention. The minority report of the Committee on Resolutions offered a substitute motion declaring that wherever practical one organization should have jurisdiction over an industry, but if the majority of workers concerned were opposed to this there should be federation of all crafts in the industry into a department. This substitute, as well as the original resolution, was voted down, though it secured about one-third of the votes cast.[1] The existence of a decided minority in the A. F. of L. which is eager for the reorganization of the labor movement along industrial lines is shown by the continually recurring resolutions on the subject. One that was presented in

[1] *Report of the Proceedings of the 32nd Annual Convention* of the A. F. of L., 1912, p. 312.

1919 by a delegate from the Central Labor Council of Portland, Oregon, expresses well the point of view of those who favor such a reorganization. It says in part:

> Whereas an aristocracy of union labor would curse the world as sorely as has the aristocracy of capitalism, and
>
> Whereas, by the introduction of machinery one unskilled man is enabled to render a large number of skilled mechanics jobless, and
>
> Whereas, through the process of changing the methods of doing the world's work it is not far amiss to state that "there are no crafts at the present stage of industrial development," and
>
> Whereas the new industrial democracy must be met with entirely new plans of action by the toilers; be it
>
> Resolved . . . that the General Executive Board proceed at once to formulate a plan for the reorganization of the labor movement, to change from the craft line plan to one based on the plan of industries or "plant" unions, making all working cards universally interchangeable; to empower the several shop committees representing the different classes of work in each plant to form a general shop or plant committee, invested with power to legislate in all matters of interest to the workmen of the industry . . .[3]

An elaborate plan for district, state and federal councils follows. Needless to say, this resolution shared the fate of its predecessors. The subject was again brought up at the convention of 1921, and as usual the vote was against the adoption of the industrial form of organization.

Variations from Craft Type

Although the traditional form of association in the A. F. of L. is based solely on craft lines, as a matter of fact only a small proportion of its affiliated unions are now made up of men doing exactly the same kind of

[3] *Report of the Proceedings of the 39th Annual Convention* of the A. F. of L., 1919, p. 348.

work. Mr. Theodore Glocker, writing in 1915, states that of 133 national unions, most of which are affiliated with the A. F. of L., only 28 are really craft unions in the strictest sense, and of these about one-half are co-operating in loose alliances with related trades.[8] There have been a few instances of the disintegration of unions into separate craft groups, but the tendency is in the other direction. In some cases unions consisting of workers in a single craft have extended their jurisdiction to include unorganized workers in related crafts; in others, two or three existing unions have decided that their interests would be furthered by amalgamation. With the development of specialization, still other bodies have split into several different crafts but the workers have retained their membership in their original organization, so that it is no longer a body made up of people of a single craft, but rather a union of several related ones.

Amalgamation of Related Trades—Different Types

There are three types of organization in the A. F. of L. which combine different crafts. In the first place we have the perfected type of industrial union which attempts to include all who work on a given product, and all who are in any way connected with it. The brewery union and the two unions of miners are examples of this type, of course. In the second place there are semi-industrial combinations which organize in one union several of the crafts making up the trade, but not all of them. Some of these unions include only a small proportion of the crafts in the industry, while others comprise almost all. Usually unskilled workers are excluded and also those working in auxiliary trades which are necessary

[8] Glocker, *American Economic Review*, September, 1915, "Amalgamation of Related Trades in American Trade Unions," p. 554.

for the operation of the industry and yet are not confined to that particular one; but occasionally one or the other of these types of workers is included. For instance, the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America exclude the members of auxiliary trades, such as engineers and firemen, but claim jurisdiction over all grades of skill in the slaughtering and packing establishments, and also over all sausage makers and meat cutters in department stores or other stores. This union furnished an example of solidarity in 1904 when it called a strike for the benefit of the least skilled and most poorly paid workers. The A. F. of L. has been slow to encourage the inclusion of the unskilled, however, and such instances are comparatively rare. Where processes have become so subdivided that immigrants can be trained in a short time to carry on even the more difficult ones, and hence have become "potentially dangerous competitors," as Mr. Glocker calls them, there is more likelihood of admitting them than otherwise.

Meat Cutters

The strike of the meat cutters in 1904 showed plainly the limitations of any movement which does not include the auxiliary trades as well as the unskilled workers. The engineers and firemen remained at work keeping the refrigerating plant going when the other workers went out. They later decided to join in the strike out of sympathy for the others, but by the time they had secured permission of their own officials it was too late for their action to be of any assistance. The Amalgamated Meat Cutters have always insisted that the failure of the strike was due to this lack of speedy cooperation on the part of the engineers and firemen.[4] The packing industry has

[4] Groat, *Organized Labor*, p. 422.

often been held up as an example of the bad effects of craft unionism, for in spite of the broad claims of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen, the workers in the industry have been divided into a dozen or more national trade unions affiliated with the A. F. of L. Many of these unions have had contracts containing a clause which forbade giving support to other unions in a controversy with the stock-yard companies. In 1918 an organizing campaign led by John Fitzpatrick and W. Z. Foster brought these different unions into a cooperative alliance, however, and important concessions were gained from the companies by their joint action.

Typographical Union

The International Typographical Union is an example of a union which has reached out to one of the auxiliary trades, in its efforts to control the machinists in the printing offices, and has come into conflict with the International Association of Machinists by so doing. In this issue the A. F. of L. took no positive stand and the case was won by the stronger union, which happened to be that of the typographical workers. The printing industry furnishes an interesting example of a tendency toward industrial unionism, following a period when the tendency was in the opposite direction. Originally the Typographical Union included many crafts—bookbinders, photo-engravers, electrotypers, and pressmen—which later broke away and formed separate organizations. Later still, these different printing unions became affiliated in the Allied Printing Trades Association. At the present time there are groups in all these craft bodies which are seeking reunion. The Typographical Union, which has always been somewhat conservative, has within it a group called the progressive party, with its own organ

and speakers, and due to its influence a new progressive president was elected by the union in the summer of 1920. If this party succeeds in dominating the union as it hopes to, there may be a decided step taken in the direction of industrial unionism.

Amalgamations Based on Materials Used

The third type of combination in the A. F. of L. is that of crafts which work for different employers and are bound together simply by the material on which they work. The United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, which has extended its jurisdiction over machine wood workers and hopes some day to include all kinds of wood workers, is an example of this, as is also the defunct Amalgamated Rubber Workers, which attempted to include all who made articles out of rubber. The difficulty with this type of amalgamation is that the different workers have few interests in common and hence are not likely to stick together. Nevertheless this is the characteristic form taken by industrial unions in Germany.

International Seamen's Union

Two unions which approach the pure type of industrial unionism are the International Seamen's Union and the International Longshoremen's Association. The International Seamen originally claimed jurisdiction over all who "make a living by following the sea, lake, or river in any capacity on steam or sailing vessels," but later specified a definite list of occupations which were included in its membership. At the 1920 convention [5] it was reported that there had been in the union the previous year 30,000 sailors, 27,000 firemen, 9,400 cooks, and 8,600

[5] *Monthly Labor Review*, March, 1920, Report of the 23rd Annual Convention of the International Seamen's Union of America.

fishermen. Besides these, the constitution provides for the inclusion of waiters, porters, watchmen, oilers, coal passers, and various other workers on ship board. The relationship of all the workers on a ship is in the nature of the case likely to be closer than that of different crafts on land, so it is not strange that a semi-industrial form of organization should have been adopted. This has brought it into conflict with the Hotel and Restaurant Employees who demand jurisdiction over the cooks and stewards on ship board, however. The highly skilled marine engineers and the mates and pilots have refused to affiliate with the unskilled workers, who make up a large proportion of the organization, so the Seamen's Union cannot be called wholly industrial. Although the Association of Masters, Mates and Pilots belongs to the A. F. of L., its members are to some extent looked upon as representatives of the employers' interests, since they have general authority over other workers, and in some cases even the power to "hire and fire." Occasionally this Association and also the National Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association have been willing to cooperate with the Seamen, but in general they stand somewhat aloof.

International Longshoremen's Association

The International Longshoremen's Association has also tried to extend its jurisdiction to include maritime workers, and has come into conflict with the Seamen's Union by so doing. Originally it included only those handling freight and loading and unloading ships, but at its 1901 convention it made a definite statement of its desire to expand so as to include all maritime workers in one concentrated body. The following year it changed its name to the International Longshoremen,

Marine and Transport Workers' Association. This was considered a direct assumption of the functions of the Seamen's Union and was declared an act of bad faith by the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. which refused to sanction the change of name. The longshoremen continued to organize seamen, however. At the 1904 convention of the A. F. of L. the Committee on Resolutions held that technically the Longshoremen's Association had encroached on the rights of the Seamen's Union. but as it had developed a strong organization of marine and transport workers it should be allowed to hold them.[6] The convention refused to come to any definite decision in the matter, but nevertheless the longshoremen decided to give up the objectionable title provided that action did not involve giving up any of their new locals. Since then they have continued to absorb various groups of marine workers.

In the port of New York, the longshoremen had in 1919 four locals of boatmen, the Harbor Boatmen's Union, the Lighter Captains' Union, the Tidewater Boatmen, and the Railroad Port and Terminal Workers. The harbor boatmen's local was formerly affiliated with the Seamen's Union but withdrew from it in 1916 because it felt that insufficient support had been given it by the parent organization in its efforts to get wages and working conditions which were comparable with those of other harbor unions. On the other hand, the Seamen's Union charged that the Longshoremen's Association had definitely tried to alienate the boatmen. Both the harbor boatmen's local and the railroad port and terminal workers' local are built up on industrial lines, unlike the other harbor unions, and have jurisdiction over fire-

[6] Blum, *Jurisdictional Disputes in American Trade Unions*, 1913, pp. 412-13.

men, cooks, porters, oilers, deckhands, boat dispatchers, bridge masters, wheelsmen, and various other workers—the difference being that the latter organization is restricted to the marine workers who are employed by the railroads. The competition of shore unions of cooks and firemen whose members are employed on harbor craft has impeded the progress of these locals somewhat. In 1917 an affiliation of the different marine unions of the port of New York was formed and a concerted demand made by them upon the boat owners of the harbor. Before this there had been little joint action, though the marine engineers and masters, mates and pilots had begun to cooperate in 1913, and the harbor boatmen had aided the engineers in their strike of 1916. On October 5, 1917, representatives of these three organizations, and of the Tidewater Boatmen's Union, and the International Union of Steam and Operating Engineers, met and formed the Marine Transport Workers' Affiliation of the Port of New York.[7] Later the Lighter Captains' Union and the Railroad Port and Terminal Workers joined the Affiliation. During the strike which tied up the whole harbor early in 1919, there was some dissensions among the affiliated unions because the lighter captains and tidewater boatmen signed a separate agreement with private boatowners before the general settlement was made, and because the railroad port workers who had gained more than the others through the action of the Director General of Railroads, were loath to jeopardize their own welfare by supporting the others. Nevertheless the Affiliation proved a successful experiment, on the whole, and perhaps may point the way toward an industrial organization of the transport workers

[7] For a full account of this Affiliation see Squires, *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 27, pp. 840-74.

in the United States similar to that of England. Of course the Seamen's Union would need to be included in any such organization, and all the different bodies would need to draw much closer together than they have yet done. The present head of the Longshoremen is distinctly conservative and would probably not care to adopt the English Transport Workers' Federation as a model, but some form of federation may prove possible in the future.

Federation of Related Trades—Their Nature

Another instance of the tendency toward industrial unionism is seen in the development of departments within the A. F. of L. by means of federation of related trades, for the purpose of settling jurisdictional disputes and bringing about a certain measure of concerted action. This form is what Professor Commons and his associates call "industrial unionism of the upper stratum," that of skilled workers. As has already been pointed out, however, the alliance of the different bodies is too loose and the independence of each one too great for it to be considered true industrial unionism. An official of the United Automobile, Aircraft, and Vehicle Workers in one of the union leaflets comments on them as follows:

> These departments make concerted action possible among all the workers of a given industry, but their effectiveness is ruined by the division of authority and power among several National and International craft unions. The Council or Department plan is nothing more or less than a confession that greater unity is needed, but those in control of the old machine of the Labor Movement are reluctant to give way to the new order of things. They would patch up the old vehicle; they would put a motor in the old wagon and thus make an up to date automobile of it, but would decline to accept the modern vehicle, because it means a new deal in the Labor Movement and they are afraid they would be lost in the shuffle.

It is not only the officials but also the general membership of the different unions of skilled crafts who hesitate to bring about too close an alliance for fear that their own interests might not be sufficiently safeguarded. Nevertheless the departments are a concession to the spirit demanding a closer affiliation of related trades, even though in the minds of more radical workers they do not go far enough to be of great significance in themselves.

Building Trades Department

The first of these departments was that of the building trades which was organized by the A. F. of L. in 1908. The movement for joint action by the unions in the building industry had begun many years before in the formation of numerous local building trades' councils, which had considerable success. They had no general laws or international oversight, however, and hence there was great lack of uniformity among them. Independent unions as well as those of the A. F. of L. were admitted. In 1898 the first step toward a national affiliation was taken when the National Building Trades Council was formed. The leading spirit of this movement was the official of an independent union which had seceded from its International, so the new Council was not recognized by the A. F. of L. In 1903 the Structural Building Trades Alliance of America was formed by delegates from the A. F. of L. unions in the building trades, and all subordinate unions were ordered to affiliate with its local branches where such existed. The degree of cooperation secured by the new Alliance was less than was expected, however, so in 1908 it was reorganized into the present Building Trades Department. The department has had great success in settling the numerous jurisdictional disputes which have arisen, due to the frequent changes in the industry,

and in bringing about cooperation between the 17 international unions which are now affiliated with it. In 1921 a total membership of 866,735 was reported at the A. F. of L. convention, and an affiliation of 392 local building trades councils and 8 state organizations of workers in the industry.

Metal Trades Department

The next to be organized was the Metal Trades Department which was officially launched in February, 1909. This also was the outgrowth of many years of effort to construct a central organization. In 1894 a conference of machinists, blacksmiths, and pattern makers was held, under the leadership of the International Association of Machinists, at which the Federated Metal Trades was formed to bring about a closer relationship between the metal workers of the country. The new alliance had slight success, however. The next move for a national federation was made at the A. F. of L. convention in 1900, where a temporary organization of metal unions was formed. Local metal trades' councils were then instituted in many cities. Meanwhile the Federated Metal Trades continued its existence independent of the A. F. of L. but made little advancement. A different form of organization was evidently needed, and in 1909 this was brought about in the founding of the Metal Trades Department of the A. F. of L. The rapid strides made by the new Department have shown the wisdom of this form of alliance. At the 1920 convention of the A. F. of L. the Department reported 17 international unions and 7 district metal trades' councils, as well as many city councils, affiliated with it. It includes machinists, steam engineers, stationary firemen, boilermakers, sheet metal workers, structural iron workers, foundry workers, pattern makers,

and various others who handle metal. The department was instrumental in negotiating agreements in the ship building industry during the war, and has done valuable work in settling disputes between its affiliated unions.

Mining Department

A Mining Department was organized in February, 1912, by delegates from the United Mine Workers and Western Federation of Miners. At the first convention held in November of that year plans were made for an extensive organization campaign, and the affiliation of other unions was considered. Since that time steam shovel and dredge men, structural iron workers, machinists, iron, steel and tin workers, and oil and refinery workers have also been admitted. The departments are not mutually exclusive, as will be noticed, and some of these unions belong to two or three others. The looseness of the association makes this quite possible.

Railroad Employees Department

The first attempt at forming a department of railroad employees was made in 1908 at the A. F. of L. convention, in order to promote education and legislative activity. An increasing demand for a more militant form of organization that would include joint action for defense and offense as well as propaganda resulted in a complete reorganization in November, 1912, and the formation of the Railroad Employees Department as we now know it. The immediate cause for this step was the convention held in Kansas City in April, 1912, by delegates from the workers on thirty-five western railroads to consider calling a general strike in support of the strike on the Illinois Central and Harriman lines. The vote on this question was in the negative, but the outcome of the convention

was the formation of a new body called the Federation of Federations of Railway Employees, and the adoption of a constitution providing for salaried officers giving all their time to the work of the organization. The A. F. of L. insisted, however, that an agreement be reached between this new body and the Railroad Employees Department, and as a result the two organizations merged into one, under the name of the Department but with the constitution and officers of the new Federation. The aim of the Department is to bring within it all railway employees, to secure the eight-hour day and a minimum wage scale, and to bring about national agreements on the railroads, through the closer affiliation which had become necessary because of the failure of individual craft efforts. The unions affiliated with it are chiefly those in the so-called shop crafts, including the International Association of Machinists, the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders and Helpers, the Brotherhood of Blacksmiths and Helpers, the Brotherhood of Railway Carmen, the Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, and the Amalgamated Sheet Metal Workers. In the transportation division are the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks and the Switchmen's Union.

The constitution of the Department as amended in 1918 provides for an Executive Council made up of the presidents of the affiliated organizations, and for three other officers. Four territorial divisions are recognized, including Western, Eastern, Southern, and Canadian railroads, and a fifth division comprising all locomotive and car equipment plants in the United States and Canada. In each division a Federated Board is created, made up of the general chairmen of the different unions. These boards have the power to draw up rules and regulations as a basis for new agreements with railroad managers, sub-

ject to the approval of the Executive Council and the president of the Department. When a joint agreement has been made between a Federated Board and the railroad managers, it is binding on all the organizations participating in it. No craft may withdraw from it after the decision to present the terms for a new agreement to the managers has once been made. A strike cannot be called by the Department till all the affiliated organizations have voted on it in accordance with their own constitutions. The system federations of different crafts which have grown up on the different railroad systems are also recognized by the Department. These federations are responsible for maintaining conditions already agreed upon, but cannot open negotiations for new agreements without the consent of the president and Executive Council of the Department. Each one has an Advisory Board, composed of five representatives of each craft, and a Board of Adjustment with one representative of each craft to handle grievances with the managers. Such federations must be established on all systems where three or more unions affiliated with the Department exist. In 1920 there were 132 system federations chartered by the Department, including all the larger trunk lines in the United States and Canada.

Tendency Toward Industrial Unionism on Railroads

The railroads illustrate admirably the unconscious drift in the direction of industrial unionism even among the more conservative workers. In the early days of organization there was practically no concerted action on the part of the different railroad unions. Firemen would "scab" on engineers, and engineers would try to persuade young firemen not to join the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen. There was not even united action on the

part of a single craft upon a railroad system. The first step toward enlarging the fighting unit was the inclusion of all the workers of one craft in negotiations with employers but this still left it possible for employers to play one craft off against another. The next step came when system federations were formed and joint demands made by them. Such federations were first formed by the four brotherhoods of transportation workers—the conductors, engineers, firemen, and trainmen—and then by the A. F. of L. unions in the railroad shops. Since 1905 they have spread rapidly over the country, and have done much to bring about greater cooperation among the different unions and increased power in action against employers. The shop crafts have met with greater resistance than the brotherhoods in establishing their federations. The great strike on the Illinois Central and Harriman lines, lasting from September, 1911, to June, 1915, was due primarily to the insistence of the different unions on bargaining collectively and the refusal of the railroad managers to deal with more than one at a time. It was this struggle which gave the impetus to the reorganization of the Railroad Employees Department of the A. F. of L. The strike was finally lost, but it had proved so costly to the railroads that other companies hesitated to go into a similar struggle, so the system federations have been generally recognized since then.[8]

Affiliation by Territorial Divisions

It was still possible for one system federation to work against another, however, so a wider affiliation proved necessary. This was brought about by the uniting of organizations in different territorial divisions. In the first

[8] Foster, *The Railroaders' Next Step* (Chicago, 1921), p. 23.

place the divisional movement among the transportation workers brought together merely workers of one craft, but soon it developed to include others. In 1901 the conductors and trainmen began to form such alliances, and in 1913 the engineers and firemen. The working agreement between the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, which was adopted in 1913 and revised in 1918, provided that when one organization was on strike members of the other should not do the work of the strikers; nor should either organization force those of its members who were working under an agreement made by the other to go out on strike. All disputes were to be settled by arbitration. Among numerous instances of joint action on the part of the railroad brotherhoods may be mentioned the demands made upon forty-two eastern railroads by the conductors and trainmen in 1913, and those made by the engineers and firemen upon ninety-eight western railroads in 1914. These alliances were but the first step toward concerted action by the four Brotherhoods on all the railroads in the country. In the great struggle over the eight-hour day in 1916 and 1917, the four united in the largest and best organized movement yet known upon the railroads, and in the hastily passed Adamson law secured important gains without the contemplated strike. The first divisional movement among the shop crafts took place in 1916, when the different crafts on twelve southern railroads united. After the railroads came under government control at the beginning of the war, the movement for system and division federations spread very rapidly, due to the encouragement given to organization by the government. In September, 1919, the six shop unions secured a joint agreement covering all the railroads throughout the country.

Plumb Plan Campaign

After the war the various railroad unions, including the four great brotherhoods, the shop crafts, and miscellaneous railroad groups belonging to the A. F. of L., united in a determined effort to solve the problems connected with the approaching end of war-time control of transportation. The first step taken was the endorsement of the Plumb Plan for government ownership of the railroads and joint management by representatives of officials, employees, and the public. A vigorous campaign of publicity in regard to this plan was entered upon, the different unions sharing the expenses incurred by it. The Plumb Plan League was formed, and a new journal called *Labor* issued to help in this educational campaign. The demand of the railroad workers for government ownership and democratic control of railroads, and the support which it had from many other unions, are significant as a sign of a changing attitude within the American labor movement. The large majority which passed the resolution endorsing the principle expressed by the Plumb Plan of the A. F. of L. convention in 1920, in spite of the strong opposition of President Gompers, indicates a growing sense of the need for a new system of control of industry. As the hope for some such reorganization of industry is bound up with the aspirations of most industrial unionists, this vote may be significant as showing the increased power which their group has in the orthodox labor movement.

Cooperation in Resisting Wage Cuts

After the passage of the Transportation Act, the sixteen unions entered into cooperation in the industrial field, as they already had in the political, and carried on a movement for wage increases. When the railroad executives

determined early in 1921 to reduce wages and put an end to the national agreements that had been made jointly with the six shop unions and separately with the other crafts, the unions presented a solid front of opposition. In spite of their efforts, however, the Railroad Labor Board decreed that these national agreements should be abrogated July 1, 1921, and that the railroads should go back to their old methods of making separate agreements with the workers in their employ. The attempt of the Association of Railroad Executives to "buy off" the brotherhoods from interfering with wage cuts of workers in other unions by announcing that the wages of the more highly skilled were to remain unchanged failed utterly, as the unions all continued to stand together in this crisis, showing much of the spirit of industrial unionism. One instance of their joint action was the calling of a joint strike on the Atlanta, Birmingham and Atlantic Railroads by the sixteen unions, on March 3, 1921, to protest against the wage cuts which had already taken place. A more important sign of cooperation was the issuance of an order for a general strike on all railroads of the country, beginning October 30, 1921. The strike, which was to be in protest against the wage reductions that had already been made and the new ones that were threatened, was ordered by the four brotherhoods and the Switchmen's Union, but the other railroad unions were expected to join it. The order was later canceled, due to the growing conviction that it would be condemned by public opinion.

Minority Movement for Amalgamation

There is an element among the railroad workers which is not content with the present degree of cooperation but is urging an actual amalgamation of the different craft unions upon the railroads. An interesting debate

on the subject was held at the 1914 convention of the Railroad Employees Department, when a resolution proposing a referendum vote of the affiliated organizations on the question of amalgamation was introduced.[9] The motion for submitting the question to the general membership was lost, but many spoke in favor of it. President Johnston of the machinists was one of those who advocated it, saying that much of the discontent inside and outside of the labor movement was due to individual craft action regardless of the rights of the other fellow, and this had been especially true in the transportation system. Some of the delegates said that if the proposition was submitted to the rank and file it would carry and therefore should not be brought before them, as the officers had no plan in mind for carrying out such an amalgamation successfully. Industrial unionism was all right in theory but not in practice. Eventually it might be the remedy, but not as long as mutual distrust and jealousy persisted among the different crafts. One delegate from the boilermakers was opposed to the scheme as a plan for gobbling up the little fellows and controlling their affairs, whereas another delegate from that union upheld it as he claimed that there was much more community of interest between those working in the same shop than between those in the same craft. Others maintained that the craft form was more scientific than the industrial form, and had secured greater benefits for the workers. This discussion is a good indication of the divergent opinions in regard to industrial unionism among the railroad unions.

In some cases individuals who have tried to circulate propaganda among the existing railroad unions in favor of consolidation have been expelled from their organiza-

[9] *Proceedings of the 2nd Biennial Convention,* Railroad Employees Department, 1914, pp. 105-116.

tions. Early in 1919 a certain lodge of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen decided unanimously to suggest to the other locals of the brotherhood a constitutional amendment providing for amalgamation with other railroad organizations. As a result President Shea ordered the expulsion of the lodge officers, according to an article in *The Railroad Worker,* and upon the refusal of the members to obey this order revoked the charter of the lodge.[10] In another case an individual who had tried in vain to get an article advocating amalgamation into the official journal of his organization was said to have been expelled for publishing it as a separate leaflet and circulating it among his fellow members. How typical of the railroad unions such action is it is difficult to state. Of course it is quite possible that other elements may have entered into the expulsion of those particular individuals; yet it is evident that progress toward industrial unionism on the railroads is not without opposition. The latest effort to educate the railroad workers in the principles of industrial unionism is that of W. Z. Foster, who is urging a carefully worked out plan for amalgamation, in order to eliminate jurisdictional disputes, prevent the financial waste due to separate organizers, officials, and conventions, and bring about more complete unity of action. His plan provides for the formation of different departments for different crafts, with free transfer between them, and a national executive committee with representatives from each department. Those in shop unions which include many who work in other industries might, according to his scheme, affiliate with both the industrial union of railroad workers and their own craft union.

[10] Epstein, *The Railroad Worker* (June, 1920), pp. 19-23.

Formation of Rival Industrial Unions

Not only is there this movement within the A. F. of L. unions and the brotherhoods toward industrial unionism on the railroads, but there are also insurgent groups which have broken away from the established organizations and formed industrial unions on a small scale. Such a one is the United Association of Railway Employees, which is a result of the "outlaw strike" of the spring and summer of 1920. This strike was due to impatience with the delay in forming the Railroad Labor Board, and dissatisfaction with union officials who seemed to many of the rank and file to be indifferent to their pressing needs. The spontaneous outburst on the part of railroad workers in various parts of the country was not due to the desire for industrial unionism to any extent, though it was a reaction against the undemocratic practices of some of the craft organizations, but nevertheless it resulted in something of the sort through the uniting of various groups of strikers and blacklisted men. The strikers about New York attempted to remain with their old organizations, but formed a local federation of engineers, firemen, conductors, road brakemen, yardmasters and other yard workers, to carry on the strike, and also to work for reforms within their different unions in order to make them more responsive to the will of the rank and file. An Executive Committee was formed, with three delegates from each craft on each road in the vicinity. The opposition of the established organizations, however, drove the leading spirits of the insurgent movement and most of their followers to withdraw entirely from their old affiliation. Some of these insurgents formed the United Association of Railroad Employees. Besides this organization there are four other industrial unions on the railroads, the Industrial Workers of the World, the Workers' Inter-

national Industrial Union, and the One Big Union, all of which have branches in many industries, and the American Federation of Railroad Workers. All of these will be considered in later chapters. Their combined membership represents only a small fraction of the total number of railroad workers, as the A. F. of L. unions and the brotherhoods claim about 95 per cent of the organized men on the roads.[11] For this reason the tendency toward cooperation among the "orthodox" unions is of much greater significance than the existence of these industrial organizations.

Tendencies Toward Industrial Unionism Among Steel Workers

The campaign for organizing iron and steel workers and the great strike in the industry called in September, 1919, afford a good illustration of the conflict between the ideas of craft independence and industrial solidarity in the American labor movement. At the A. F. of L. convention in 1918, a resolution for undertaking an organizing campaign in all the steel mills of the country was unanimously adopted, and the Committee for Organizing Iron and Steel Workers was formed, with one representative from each of the twenty-four unions connected with the industry. Mr. Fitzpatrick and Mr. Foster, who had led the successful campaign in the packing industry, were chosen to direct the new movement. Previous attempts to organize the steel workers had failed because of the method of approaching one craft at a time in individual mills, so plans were made for a whirlwind campaign to reach all sections of the steel industry simultaneously. Lack of sufficient funds made it impossible to carry out the original plan, but in certain districts the work of or-

[11] *Monthly Labor Review*, May, 1920, p. 50.

ganization was vigorously pushed by the Committee. With considerable stretching of constitutions, a uniform initiation fee of $3 was agreed upon by all but three of the cooperating unions, $1 of which was to go toward the expenses of the campaign. This was a decided triumph for the spirit of solidarity, as some of the union constitutions set fees many times as great. All applicants for membership signed uniform blanks, which were then distributed among the different unions according to craft. Informal central bodies known as Iron and Steel Workers Councils were formed in many districts, and helped create unity among the different workers in the industry. Some of these councils survived the strike. The commissariat which was established by the National Committee was another unusual example of united action. All but two of the affiliated unions (the molders and coopers, who had a very small percentage of the strikers) pooled their funds and formed a joint commissariat which gave out food to all needy strikers, regardless of whether they were members of any union or not. Because of the large number of strikers involved, the ordinary cash benefits granted by the different unions were impossible, so all the work of relief was carried on jointly in this way, under the direction of the Committee. A large part of the cost of the food was met by contributions from outside, to be sure, but the method of distribution showed a real spirit of cooperation on the part of the affiliated unions.

Types of Workers Included

The original intention was to make the movement thoroughly industrial, taking in all the workers in the industry, from those who mine the coal and iron to those who transfer the finished products to the railroad lines,

but lack of sufficient resources forced the unions to confine their work chiefly to blast furnaces and rolling mills. When company mines and fabricating works lay close to the general plants, workers in these departments were organized and went on strike with the others. Of those enrolled by the National Committee (not counting those joining in other ways), about 45 per cent belonged to the group known as iron, steel and tin workers. Next in number came the mine, mill and smelter workers, followed by the machinists, electrical workers, iron workers not included in the first group, blacksmiths, stationary firemen, railway carmen, foundry employees, hod carriers, stationary engineers, boilermakers, coal miners, molders, plumbers, quarry workers, and bricklayers, as well as several small groups comprising less than 500 members each. The final report of the secretary-treasurer of the National Committee states that 250,000 is a conservative estimate of the actual number of steel workers who joined the different unions during the campaign.

Forces Tending toward Industrial Unionism

Although the official policy of the organizing committee was to work along craft lines, there was a strong tendency toward industrial unionism among the rank and file. The "instinct of the immigrant recruit led him to associate with his shop mates of different crafts rather than with his craft mates from each shop," [12] and hence some leaders organized men in shop or plant unions. The local leaders were less influenced by the A. F. of L. doctrines than were the national organizers, and in some cases adopted the plan which seemed most natural to their inexperienced fellow workers, which was that of miniature industrial unionism. This of course led to internal

[12] Interchurch World Movement, *Report on the Steel Strike of* 1919, p. 460.

conflict with the craft principles of the twenty-four International unions. When the various organizations pulled away from the National Committee at the end of the strike, even the small amount of industrialism that existed was broken up. Throughout the strike radical groups such as the I. W. W. and the Communists ridiculed the Committee for missing a wonderful opportunity to establish an industrial union of steel workers. The I. W. W., in particular, were in active opposition to the strike, and in Pittsburgh tried to defeat it by distributing leaflets among the workers saying that an A. F. of L. strike was bound to fail. In many respects the steel industry is well adapted to the industrial form of organization, for with the introduction of new mechanical processes in the last two decades the differences in skill among the workers are growing less. Each new machine displaces skilled men at the top or unskilled at the bottom. Thus a dozen common laborers may be replaced by one semi-skilled man, and a few skilled men by one slightly less skilled. The new type of steel worker, who is becoming increasingly important, is one whose bodily strength is not necessarily great and whose intelligence is not very much above that of the common laborer, but who can handle machines accurately.[13] With the decline of skilled craftsmanship and the increasing homogeneity of the working force, the possibilities of industrial unionism grow greater. On the other hand, the opposition of the powerful craft unions who claim jurisdiction over various sections of the steel industry make any such form of organization impractical for the present.

Inadequate Cooperation of Unions

The fact that twenty-four unions were willing to cooperate to the extent that they did in establishing a uniform

[13] Interchurch World Movement, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

initiation fee, creating a joint commissariat, contributing organizers, and carrying on a long continued campaign, is significant as an indication of a growing realization of the need for concerted action. Nevertheless, the lack of an adequate amount of cooperation in order to make the strike a success is equally significant as a sign of the restricted viewpoint which makes it difficult for many unions to see beyond the immediate interests of their own craft to the needs of an industry as a whole. For one thing, the amount of money and the number of organizers contributed by the affiliated unions were inadequate for carrying on a successful organizing campaign throughout the industry. The fact that the resources of the organizing committee were so meager in the early months of the campaign when a vigorous movement all over the country might have accomplished much, was a source of weakness. Most of the unions contributed to the National Committee little if any more than they received back in initiation fees, according to Mr. Foster. In fact a single organization, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, which was in no way connected with the campaign, gave to the Committee $100,000, a sum fully as great as that which came from the twenty-four unions combined. Another instance of the lack of cooperation was the absence of centralized control over the organizers sent out from the different international headquarters. These remained under the direction of their own union officials, and were shifted about without regard for the needs of the campaign as a whole.

More serious still was the definite failure of certain of the twenty-four unions to uphold the strike after it had been called. Mr. Foster, in his history of the struggle, states, for instance, that the executive officers of the steam and operating engineers condemned the strike in the be-

ginning and urged their members to remain at work, because of a fight with the electrical workers over jurisdiction. Local unions of engineers, however, repudiated the directions of their officials and struck with the others. The Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers, which claimed a large proportion of the new recruits, especially won the condemnation of the leaders of the strike by trying to force the common laborers back into the mills with which the union had contracts, in Youngstown and elsewhere, while the struggle was still going on. These contracts said that any new members of the union, although not coming under the terms of the agreement, must nevertheless continue work until the expiration of the scale year—which meant the following June. This act which caused a serious break in the strike seemed like treason to the rest of the steel workers, yet it was simply an instance of the old conflict between loyalty to a contract made with employers and loyalty to fellow-workers which is continually cropping out in the labor movement. Throughout the strike the officials of the Amalgamated Association viewed the movement with a certain degree of disapproval, although its president was the first to move that the strike be called on September 22. Both before and after it was called, they are said to have attempted to make separate agreements with one of the steel companies, ignoring the other workers in the industry.[14] The Stationary Engineers and the Switchmen, two of the affiliated unions, did not call their members out of the steel plants and yards, but several of the Switchmen's locals went out nevertheless. According to a local strike leader, they failed to go on strike in one district because of rivalry with the trainmen, who would have taken the

[14] Foster, *The Great Steel Strike and Its Lessons* (New York, 1920), p. 174.

switchmen's places and prevented their ever getting them back. The National Committee made a great effort to get the railroad men on the switching roads between the various steel plants to join the strike, and the railroad locals near Pittsburgh voted to do so but got no encouragement from their higher officials. Although most of the railroad unions were in no way pledged to cooperate in the campaign, their assistance would have counted for a great deal.

The same strike leader, who commented on the switchmen went on to say that the officers of the electrical workers who did not belong to the group of twenty-four, claimed that "their people didn't want steel organized because electrical workers during slack times in union shops liked to be free to get steel jobs, which they couldn't if steel was organized." He continued as follows:

> After the strike half a dozen towns' Steel Councils met in Gary to start an independent Steel Industrial Union. They'll get nowhere. If they take I. W. W. leadership or W. I. I U. they'll be outlawed. If they go it alone, secessionist, they'll be fought tooth and nail by the A. F. of L. . . . And all the while the twenty-four Internationals won't install the universal transfer card or the low reinstallment fee or remit dues or do any of the things they've got to do to keep these new steel locals alive. These narrow selfish policies wreck the movement.[15]

Many others made similar comments. One international union president not involved in the strike remarked: "The international unions are primarily business organizations for carrying on constructive negotiations for workers. Why should they bankrupt themselves for immigrants who originally took the steel jobs away from Americans?" [16] In short, the unions were ready to receive

[15] Interchurch World Movement, *op. cit.*, p. 182.
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 180.

new members, but did not throw themselves very heartily into a struggle that was made necessary by the determined pressure of the rank and file of the steel workers. Finding it impossible to hold the mass of workers back from striking in the fall of 1919, the component unions endorsed the strike but did not put their full fighting strength back of it. Even in the most crucial periods it proved impossible to get many of the twenty-four International presidents together for a meeting of the organizing committee. The usual thing was for a union to be represented by some minor official without power to act, with the result that the National Committee could not function effectively. When an important step was decided upon, it was repeatedly discovered that some union far from the scene of action was unwilling to support the course entered upon, so that the whole plan collapsed. "This organization," said one of the strike leaders, "has as much cohesiveness as a load of furniture." [17]

New Committee for Organizing Steel Workers

When the strike failed after a struggle of nearly four months, the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers withdrew from the general organizing committee, and as a consequence the campaign among the steel workers had to be discontinued for a time. The convention of the A. F. of L. in 1920 deplored this action and instructed the Executive Council to try to bring about renewed cooperation among the unions connected with the industry. As a result, a new committee to organize the steel workers was formed in January, 1921, with the president of the Amalgamated Association as chairman. Only fourteen organizations, those most closely connected with the industry, are represented on it. The Amalga-

[17] Interchurch World Movement, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

mated Association had for some time had technical jurisdiction over all workers in the steel industry, though it had never attempted to enforce its claims. When it withdrew from the National Committee it declared, however, that it intended to insist on including all classes of workers in the industry, thus becoming an actual industrial union.[18] The general policy of the union has always been so conservative that any such action seems quite unlikely, as a matter of fact; and the formation of the new joint committee indicates that no marked change of this sort is contemplated.

Evolutionary Process in Direction of Industrial Unionism

In spite of the numerous cases of friction, and the fact that the unions involved put forth only a fraction of their actual strength in the struggle, Mr. Foster believes that from an evolutionary standpoint the steel campaign marked a decided advance in union methods, in that it substituted group action for individual craft action. He views the whole labor movement as undergoing a process of evolution from the stage of isolated craft action to that of a federation of crafts; from a federation to an amalgamation of crafts; from an amalgamation of all the crafts in one industry to a federation of different industries, such as the Triple Alliance in England;[19] and finally from a federation of different industries to an actual amalgamation of all groups of workers into one great organization of the working class. Labor in the United States is for the most part in the federation stage

[18] Foster, *op. cit.*, p. 253.

[19] An agreement for a similar alliance in this country was adopted on Feb. 22, 1922, by representatives of the United Mine Workers, the International Association of Longshoremen, and fifteen railroad unions, subject to ratification by the different organizations concerned. If this becomes effective it will be very significant from the standpoint of industrial unionism.

at present, and suffers from the weakness of mere federation—the lack of cohesion and unity of purpose, the craft prejudices, and the inability to sink the interests of one group in the good of the whole. "Federation is all right as far as it goes," Mr. Foster says. "It marks an important stage in the workers' development from craft to class unionism. It is at once an admission of the ineffectiveness of craft action and a striving for industrial solidarity. . . . But the trouble with it is that it does not go far enough." [20] The only way to make labor fully effective is to proceed from this stage to that of amalgamation.

Trade Union Educational League

Mr. Foster is convinced that the progress toward industrial unionism must come not by building up new organizations, but by uniting those that already exist into larger wholes. Early in his career he was connected with the I. W. W. for a short period, but his experience with them convinced him that their form of organization was without practical results. The only way to accomplish anything in the labor movement, he decided, was to take the craft unions as they were and develop within them the sense of solidarity with other workers and recognition of the need for more united action. For that reason he has for years been preaching to radicals to stay within the A. F. of L., or rejoin it, instead of trying to build up rival unions on more idealistic and revolutionary basis. Having been closely connected with the federation movement in the railroad, packing, and steel industries, he has now launched a new organization known as the Trade Union Educational League, which he says aims to "broaden, deepen, clarify and speed up the natural evolution now taking place" in the labor world. His organiza-

[20] Foster, *The Railroaders' Next Step*, p. 27.

tion is to have branches in different industries, all working toward the amalgamation of crafts in those industries. The progress toward industrial unionism in this country, he believes, has been retarded by the fact that many of those who have been impatient with a narrow craft spirit have broken away from the orthodox labor movement. Although the tendency is in the direction of industrial unionism, the Trade Union Educational League declares that "in every country the speed and intelligence with which this evolutionary process is going on depends directly upon the degree of organized clear-sighted effort being put forth by the ever-present small minority of active wideawake workers, who are keenly alive to the necessity for more united action by labor." It is too early to tell how much influence this new Educational League will have within the A. F. of L., but it approaches the problem of industrial unionism in a manner which may have far-reaching results.

CHAPTER II

INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM IN THE BREWING INDUSTRY

Beginning of Organization

The oldest of the true industrial unions within the A. F. of L. is that of the brewery workers. There were many early attempts to form local organizations of these workers, beginning with the one in Cincinnati in 1879, but the first national organization in the industry was formed in 1886 by delegates from five different centers. This was merely a craft association of brewers, however, and not until the following year were its doors opened to other workers in the industry so that it could really be called an industrial union. With the widening of the scope of the organization its name was changed from National Union of the Brewers of the United States to National Union of United Brewery Workers of the United States. This title remained (with only the substitution of the word "International" for "National" and "America" for "the United States") until 1917, when a change became necessary because of the inclusion of soft drink workers. The present name, evolved through various stages, is International Union of United Brewery, Flour, Cereal and Soft Drink Workers of America.

The early struggles of the brewery workers against low wages, excessively long hours, and brutal treatment were very bitter and in many cases futile. A union formed in New York in 1881, and soon including all the brewers of New York, Brooklyn and Newark, was speedily crushed when its members dared strike for the twelve-hour day. The employers blacklisted all connected with the

organization, and although they granted the twelve-hour day before long, they succeeded in so terrifying the masses of the workers that for three years no further attempt was made to form a union. In 1884, however, twelve workers in New York formed what was called Brewers' Union No. 1, as a local assembly of the Knights of Labor. This later became the nucleus of the national organization in the industry. A boycott was soon declared by the Central Labor Union of the city against a brewery owner who had discharged members of the new union, and after seven months he was forced to capitulate. This victory put new courage into the workers, and before long all the breweries of the city were once more organized, with separate unions for drivers, malsters, and brewers. A joint board of arbitration was formed, the ten-hour day established, and other improvements secured, by a contract with the employers made in 1886.

Relations with Knights of Labor

In the meantime, Brewers' Union No. 1 had withdrawn from the Knights of Labor, partly because it now felt strong enough to exist independently, and partly because it was disgusted with the intrigues within the District Assembly to which it belonged. The Assembly had ordered the brewers to go on strike in behalf of some striking coal shovelers. Mr. Schlueter in his history of the organization [1] states that the union, "which owed its existence to the solidarity of other labor organizations [in the New York boycott], would undoubtedly have responded to this call for a sympathetic strike had not the District Assembly refused to order the strike for the engineers and firemen who had to work with the coal

[1] Schlueter, *The Brewing Industry and the Brewery Workers' Movement* (1910), p. 118.

shovelers." Being indignant at this discrimination, Brewers' Union No. 1 left the Order. Various other groups of brewery workers were organized under the K. of L., and remained in the Order for some time after the National Union of United Brewery Workmen, with which they were affiliated, had received a charter from the A. F. of L. The U. B. W. had at its first convention decided to join the A. F. of L., and passed resolutions condemning the K. of L. for advocating prohibition and for not helping them sufficiently in their struggles. Later the attitude of the brewery workers changed, however, as they discovered that the Knights were giving them more effective help in their boycotts than was the Federation. As the boycott of non-union beer was the strongest weapon which could be used against the brewery owners, the union was especially dependent on the cooperation of all organized labor. Accordingly at the convention of 1892 the majority of the delegates were in favor of forming a National Trade District within the K. of L., so that each local might have the help of both organizations. Leaders of both the A. F. of L. and the K. of L. objected to this, though a similar arrangement had been made for the United Mine Workers. The following year the executive officers of the K. of L. agreed to the plan, however, and although it was not fully carried out, a large number of the brewery locals formed Trade Districts within the Order, having labels which combined the emblems of both the A. F. of L. and the Knights. As a matter of fact, friction between the two organizations did much harm to the union. Neither one gave the support which it might have given if the brewery workers had belonged to it exclusively, and after a time the union began to recognize its mistake in attempting this double affiliation. Accordingly, when the A. F. of L. in 1896 ordered the

U. B. W. to withdraw from the K. of L. on pain of losing its charter, it decided to obey.

Change in Character of Membership

After this, various assemblies of brewers which had not yet joined the A. F. of L. organization gradually drifted away from the Order into the U. B. W., and certain other unions joined it also. Before these new accessions the union had been distinctly German in character but the new elements were largely English-speaking and gave a somewhat different tone to the organization. National antipathies between Irish and Germans had made trouble in the industry for some time, and did not wholly disappear with the merging of these groups into one organization. In fact the U. B. W. seems to have had an unusually hard time with internal dissensions and disputes of various sorts. Rival factions repeatedly set up separate organizations which for short periods made the path of the older union very thorny. These controversies, combined with strong opposition from employers, hindered the progress of the union for many years. By 1902 it was fairly well established, however, and had won success in New York and most of the large cities of the western and central states.

Industrial Form of Organization—Why Adopted

Some of the difficulties of the union were due to the industrial form of organization which it had adopted. At the convention of 1887, the national secretary had stressed the craft spirit by declaring that the organization must "guard the noble trade of the brewers' craft" so that the man who had learned his trade should not be "reduced to a factory worker by the admission of elements who had never before seen a brewery"; but nevertheless he

recognized that the other workers in the industry must be brought into the union if it was to have the proper foundation.[2]

> If the drivers, the coopers, the engineers, the firemen, the malsters, had helped us, our victory would have been assured within 24 hours. . . . Not only are the brewers dependent upon these branches; no, each one is dependent upon the others. Solidarity, man for man from roof to cellar, all for each and each for all . . . this alone can secure our future.[3]

Having learned by experience the need of united action, the convention adopted this declaration as its own. The special character of the industry made the industrial form of organization seem the only practical and effective one. The men who actually mix malt and hops and attend to the fermentation process include only a minority of the workmen around the breweries, and without the support of other groups they were powerless against the united force of the employers.[4] In comparison with the total amount of capital invested in the industry, only a few workers were employed and these were scattered among a large number of establishments, so that unity among the workers in each brewery seemed essential, if they were to have any measure of success. The large proportion of unskilled laborers made it especially desirable to have a form of organization which should include them as well as the various skilled groups. This has become increasingly true with the development of the industry, for in the modern beer brewing establishments an experienced and trained workman can at any time be replaced by an inexperienced man without damage to the business as long as the manager keeps one experienced man in each

[2] Schlueter, *op. cit.*, p. 135.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 219.
[4] Blum, *Jurisdictional Disputes in American Trade Unions*, p. 417.

department.[5] In addition to these reasons, the fact that the leaders of the union had a definite Socialist philosophy which emphasized solidarity among the workers had much to do with the adoption of the industrial form of organization.

Early Jurisdictional Disputes

The industrial structure has resulted, however, in more conflicts with craft unions in the case of the brewery workers than in that of any other industrial union, according to Mr. Blum. This has been largely due to the fact that there is no preponderating number of men in the industry who could belong to no other union, as is true in the miners' organizations. The bottlers, coopers, painters, carpenters, engineers, firemen, and teamsters, who make up a large proportion of the industry, are all claimed by other organizations, with which the U. B. W. has had continual trouble. At the convention in 1897 several groups of beer drivers, masters, engineers, and firemen in the industry, who were present, decided to unite with the new body. All these branches of labor were given representation on the National Executive Board. Negotiations with the National Coopers' Union resulted in the decision that the two organizations should cooperate but that brewery coopers need not join the U. B. W. unless they wished. The first serious jurisdictional dispute which occurred in the industry came in 1896 when the Coopers' Union demanded that all coopers who had joined the U. B. W. should withdraw and join their craft organization instead. The brewery workers evaded the issue and the case was brought before the A. F. of L., which decided two years later that when cooperage required the whole time of the worker he should

[5] *Proceedings of the 18th Biennial Convention* of the International Union of United Brewery Workmen of America, 1910, p. 162.

belong to the Coopers' Union; if only part time, to the Brewers'.

Meanwhile, national unions of firemen, engineers, and teamsters had been formed and all these now demanded that the U. B. W. turn over to them all workers in those occupations. This the U. B. W. was quite unwilling to do as it believed that to split into separate trade organizations would give the employers a chance to play one group off against another. The other unions thereupon used their best efforts to alienate the firemen, engineers, and drivers from the brewery workers, and succeeded in detaching some locals of them altogether. These jurisdictional difficulties were repeatedly brought before the convention of the A. F. of L., which usually decided in favor of the craft unions. In 1900 a resolution was adopted by the A. F. of L., declaring that it seemed to be to the best interest of the labor movement for the U. B. W. to have jurisdiction over all workmen in breweries, but as execution of this decision would be hard on newly organized trade unions, exception was made in regard to painters and also in regard to coopers doing new work or making repairs in the breweries. Engineers, firemen, and other workers in breweries who belonged to their respective trade unions should not be forced to join the U. B. W., but all beer drivers should be turned over to it. This decision was confirmed the following year, and the Executive of the Federation was urged to regulate disputes between the unions concerned. Its first step was to request that all charters issued by the U. B. W. to locals of firemen and engineers since the 1900 convention of the A. F. of L. be withdrawn. Firemen and engineers were henceforth to belong to the U. B. W. only where there was no local of the craft union in their own trade, and then they were to join as individuals, not as groups.

Soon after this it was demanded that *all* firemen's and engineers' locals withdraw from the U. B. W. and join their craft organizations. This was refused by the convention of the U. B. W., which declared that it should only be done if all the firemen and engineers in other unions connected with the A. F. of L. (such as the United Mine Workers) should also be turned over to the firemen's and engineers' trade unions. The United Mine Workers naturally protested against this, and the situation remained unchanged.

Temporary Suspension from A. F. of L.

Meanwhile firemen, engineers, coopers, and teamsters continued to attack the brewery union, which refused to give up jurisdiction over any of the groups in the industry. At its convention in 1906, the A. F. of L. accordingly voted to withdraw the charter of the U. B. W. unless it submitted to the decision of the Federation, and stopped admitting not only firemen and engineers but also teamsters. Those already members might decide for themselves whether to remain in the union or not. This decision the Brewery Workmen were unwilling to accept, so they were expelled from the A. F. of L. in June, 1907. The Executive of the U. B. W. issued a statement saying that it was asking no more than had already been granted to the miners, longshoremen and seamen, and that in denying to the brewers a similar jurisdiction the A. F. of L. was guilty of unfair discrimination. The action of the Federation aroused adverse criticism on the part of the progressive portion of the labor movement everywhere. Several conferences of union representatives were held which protested emphatically against the exclusion of the brewers, and their action forced the A. F. of L. to reconsider the matter. Renewed negotiations resulted in restor-

ing the charter in 1908, with the understanding that the U. B. W. was to have jurisdiction over all in the brewery industry.

Relations with Teamsters' Union

The question was settled in theory but not in practice, however. The trade unions concerned continued to do all in their power to injure the brewers' union. In New Orleans, the teamsters' organization formed a local and offered its services to the brewery owners for lower wages than the U. B. W. drivers had been receiving. The opposition of the craft unions in this city caused the central labor body to refuse to readmit the locals of the U. B. W. for some time after the A. F. of L. had restored their national charter. Little by little, the brewery union succeeded in establishing its position, however, though jurisdictional disputes have continued to crop out from time to time.[6] In 1912 the International officers reported that only the teamsters' union was left to combat. Somewhat optimistically they declared that their organization was the most successful of all American labor organizations, having control over about 95 per cent of their industry,[7] and that their opponents were now being convinced that the industrial form of unionism was the only one which could protect the rights of the workmen. Industrial unions were active and progressive, craft unions reactionary and lifeless, they maintained. Their own success in getting better working conditions they attributed largely to their form of organization. Their troubles were not

[6] One curious dispute took place in 1909 with a local of engineers of the Western Federation of Miners in Butte, Montana, which suddenly claimed jurisdiction over all engineers and firemen in the breweries, and succeeded in persuading the brewery owners to sign a contract with it. Such difficulties between two industrial unions are rare, however. (See the *Miner's Magazine*, July 22, 1909.)

[7] *Proceedings of the 19th Biennial Convention*, U. B. W., 1912, p. 160.

over, however, for the teamsters kept insisting that the decision of the A. F. of L. in 1906 be enforced. The Federation declared in 1913 that the teamsters who handled the products of the breweries were generally employed in such a dual capacity as to make them really brewery workers. They were nearly all organized in the U. B. W. and should not be transferred to any other union. On the other hand, the drivers connected with distilleries and mineral water establishments came naturally under the jurisdiction of the Brotherhood of Teamsters.

This decision was unsatisfactory to both sides, as might be expected. The brewery delegates said that the soft drink industry had invaded the field of the U. B. W., and it was impossible to draw the line where men were working in mixed shops, as the same workers were used for bottling and delivering beer and soda water. The Executive Council of the A. F. of L. remained firm in their position that the U. B. W. had no right to try and organize the deliverers of mineral water, however. Even after the brewery union was granted right to extend its jurisdiction over soft drink workers, it was forbidden to include those who delivered the products made by these workers. An agreement was made with the Brotherhood of Teamsters early in 1917, providing that drivers and stablemen employed in the delivery of the products of beer bottling establishments (even if those establishments also produced soft drinks) should belong to the U. B. W., but those employed in places where soda and mineral water exclusively were bottled should be under the jurisdiction of the Teamsters. The settlement of the question has not satisfied either side, but they have had to put up with it for the time being. Various problems have arisen in connection with the manufacture of "near beer," which have

caused friction between the unions, and the U. B. W. still feels resentful at not being allowed to include all drivers who deliver its products.

Friction between Craft and Industrial Unions

At the 1917 convention of the brewery workers, agreements with the coopers, carpenters, engineers, and machinists in regard to the work which their members might do in breweries were also reported. Members of the Machinists' Union were to do general repairs of a certain sort, whereas members of the U. B. W. might do emergency or running repairs and operate machinery in the brewing and bottling plants; members of the Carpenters' Union were to be employed for building repairs and making boxes, while brewery workers might repair those boxes, etc. Although these difficulties in regard to the exact work which may be done by each organization are of little interest to the general public, they are important from the standpoint of industrial unionism. As long as craft and industrial unions with overlapping claims exist side by side, such problems are sure to arise. The advocates of industrial unionism point with scorn to the large number of jurisdictional disputes which occur among craft unions, but the introduction of a few industrial unions into a labor movement which is largely organized along craft lines may merely increase the sources of friction. If all workers were organized according to industries rather than according to craft, the disputes would probably be fewer, but even then the problem of marking out the boundaries between different industries might in some cases be a difficult one. Not until loyalty to the whole working class transcends loyalty to any portion of it will such disputes be wholly eliminated.

Socialist Philosophy of the U. B. W.

The United Brewery Workmen have always prided themselves on their sense of solidarity with the whole working class. Mr. Schlueter in his history of the union boasts that "the proletarian virtue of solidarity has been exercised by the U. B. W. in a far higher degree than by any other organizations." [8] He instances the contributions which they have made to help other labor groups in their struggles, their emphatic protest against what they considered the unjust hanging of the Chicago anarchists, their support of the Socialist movement, etc. There has been a strong Socialist sentiment in the organization, and many of its conventions have declared that the brewery workers should become part of the Socialist movement. Contributions to the election expenses of Socialist parties have been made by the union on some occasions, and the officers have often urged the necessity of voting the Socialist ticket. The preamble to the constitution, which puts great emphasis on the class struggle, states that the "emancipation of the working people will be achieved only when the economic and political movements have joined hands." From the first the union has impressed upon its members the necessity of becoming citizens so as to share in the political activity of labor. The *Brauer-Zeitung,* for many years the official journal of the union, did its best to instil Socialist principals in the membership. Mr. Schlueter states that as long as the union was of purely German character there was little or no opposition to this political attitude, but when the English-speaking element got greater influence serious opposition did arise in some cases.[9] The mass of the membership has not always been

[8] Schlueter, *op. cit.,* p. 249.
[9] Schlueter, *op. cit.,* pp. 247-49.

willing to follow the lead of their officers and official press in regard to political action, especially in smaller places where the Socialist movement has not been strong. According to Mr. Schlueter, many in the union do not understand the larger aims of the labor movement and the need of extending it beyond the trade union field. The hard toil of the brewery workers may have made it hard to arouse their interest in anything not directly connected with their everyday affairs, he declared. The lack of interest in the general labor movement has been partly due to the fact that in many cases workers have been forced into the union by employers who wanted the use of the union label, instead of joining of their own free will. This, of course, has been a source of weakness to the organization.

Cooperation with Employers in Prohibition Fight

Another factor in tempering the class consciousness of the union has been the fight against prohibition in which the brewery owners and the workers have fought side by side. Large sums were spent by the union in this struggle, $1 a year per member being assessed for this purpose for several years. Friendly relations were thus fostered between employers and workers who were united against a common foe, and the class struggle seemed less of a reality than the struggle to preserve the industry. Voluntary increases in wages above those provided for in existing contracts were granted by the employers, and various signs of good will were given by both sides. At the brewery workers' convention in 1920 it was announced that although the assessment for fighting prohibition was discontinued, the opposition to it would still be pushed energetically, and all members were urged to support anti-prohibition candidates, regardless of party.

A resolution in favor of endorsing Debs and the Socialist Party as the real party of labor was introduced at this convention, but the delegates ordered its withdrawal on recommendation of the Committee on Resolutions.[10] This action may have been due simply to the desire to make the prohibition issue the only one which should influence their political action, or it may have been due to a more conservative spirit in the union. The constitution which was adopted in 1920 reaffirmed belief in the class struggle, however, and stated once more that the union aimed at active participation in the political labor movement on independent labor class lines. The editor of the official journal still maintained, at the convention and in his paper, that workers should have their own political organization, and in one editorial on November 13, 1920, declared that those who had voted for Debs were more to be congratulated than those who had supported any other party in the elections which had just taken place. Resolutions expressing sympathy with Soviet Russia and the Irish Republic, and asking the release of all political prisoners, which were passed at the convention, showed something of the old spirit of the union. On the other hand, a resolution to withdraw from the A. F. of L. was defeated almost unanimously, as had been a resolution to adopt the principles of the I. W. W. a few years before. In June, 1919, a circular had been sent out to all Canadian locals, condemning outlaw secession movements such as the "One Big Union" which had just been formed, and threatening to expel any locals which joined the new organization. Such action was of course imperative for an A. F. of L. union, yet it helped give color to the charge made in the *Industrial Union News,* organ of the Detroit branch of the I. W. W., that since the U. B. W.

[10] *Proceedings of the 22nd Convention,* U. B. W., 1920, p. 108.

had "crawled back to the A. F. of L." in 1908, after its suspension, its members had "lost the little radicalism they once had and become as arch reactionary as the rest of Gompers' machine." [11] Cooperation with their employers in the anti-prohibition struggle was instanced as a glaring example of this. It was a great disappointment to the leaders in the industrial union movement which resulted in the formation of the I. W. W. that the U. B. W. refused to join them, although some of its members had signed the Manifesto calling the convention which organized that body in 1905. The decision of the brewery workers to remain in the A. F. of L. instead of uniting with the more revolutionary body has always marked them as conservative in the eyes of the more radical groups.

Effect of Prohibition on Membership

The establishment of prohibition was of course a serious blow to the U. B. W. It had steadily increased in membership up to 1914, when 67,561 members were reported, but after that it began to decline. In 1917 it had only about 45,000, in 1919 about 40,000, and by January, 1921, had shrunk to about 30,000.[12] As the national officers reported at the convention in September, 1920, that 24,213 new members had been taken into the organization on payment of initiation fees in the previous two years and nine months, the great falling off in the old membership is strikingly apparent.[13] The granting of jurisdiction over malt, yeast, vinegar, alcohol, wine, cider, cereal beverage, and mineral water workers in 1917, and over cereal, flour, and grain elevator workers in 1918, has

[11] *Industrial Union News*, Jan. 22, 1921.

[12] Figures for 1921 are from correspondence with the secretary of the union, for 1919 and 1917 from A. F. of L. records, and for 1914 from the U. B. W. convention proceedings for 1914.

[13] *Proceedings of the 22nd Convention*, U. B. W., 1920, p. 18.

helped maintain the existence of the union, although no great progress has been made in organizing some of these industries. A small minority of the men formerly employed in brewing have gone into the soft drink establishments, and a good many are employed in breweries which have now turned to the manufacture of cereal beverages or have become ice warehouses, but more than half have been obliged to turn to other industries. The cereal beverage workers now constitute the bulk of the membership. The report of the national officers to the 1920 convention gives figures for the members in the different departments of the industry, taken from the card files of the union.[14] Although the officers admit that these are very inaccurate, due to the carelessness of local secretaries in reporting expelled and suspended members, the figures give some indication of the relative strength of the different departments. They are as follows:

	Members
Brewing, cereal beverage, and soft drink industries:	
Brewing department	8,965
Bottling "	11,118
Delivery "	10,104
Mechanical "	2,778
Laborers and ice house men	1,685
Flour, cereal mills and grain elevators	4,545
Corn products plants	1,596
Yeast and vinegar industry	1,283
Malt industry	767
Food products plants	515
Syrup plants	165

These figures add up to over 10,000 more than the total membership as given at that time, so obviously they cannot be given too much credence, but they furnish some

[14] *Proceedings of the 22nd Convention,* U. B. W., 1920, p. 18.

idea of the different groups of workers represented in the organization. Although the union has been successful in organizing some of these groups, such as the yeast workers, 100 per cent of whom are said to have joined,[15] and the soft drink and mineral water workers, who have secured very good contracts with employers, there are multitudes in the different trades which have been brought under its jurisdiction who have not yet been reached.

Present Relations with Employers

On the whole the union is in a very difficult position for many reasons. An editorial in the official journal for January 8, 1921, sums up the situation as follows: "The brewing industry has been wrecked to great extent, the near-beer business is poor, the profits made on other products now manufactured in breweries are not large, and there are too many workers in the breweries," although a large proportion of those formerly employed there have left and are working in other industries.[16] In addition to discharging many of their workers (in spite of the willingness of those who remained to divide the available work with their fellow unionists, taking turns in being laid off), many of the employers have embarked upon a campaign for the open shop, and have been breaking contracts recklessly, even in the East where the main strength of the union is located. The journal complains bitterly against this sign of ingratitude on the part of the proprietors, who "ought to appreciate our cooperation" in the fight against prohibition. They fared well under their contracts with the union, the editor declares, and are making a real blunder in trying to break with it. This action on the part of employers has doubtless been due

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 36.

[16] *Brewery, Flour, Cereal and Soft Drink Workers' Journal*, Jan. 8, 1921.

partly to the rather desperate condition of the industry, and partly to the general open shop wave that has been sweeping the country. That not all of them are in sympathy with it is indicated by the fact that in September, 1920, the general officers reported to the convention that the U. S. Brewers' Association had just expressed a wish for the establishment of a national agreement with the union, and a national board of conciliation to deal with disputes.

Contract and Strike Policy

The union has always believed firmly in the policy of making contracts with employers, though local agreements seem to them more feasible than a uniform one for the whole country. All contracts must be approved by the General Executive Board, and must include some provision for arbitration. Places which have more than one local of the organization must have a joint Local Executive Board, with delegates from each local, as the controlling body in all dealings with employers. This board sees that all the various branches of the industry present their proposed contracts to the employers at the same time. No firm is recognized as a union establishment or granted the union label until the contracts of all the different branches are signed. Every effort is made to settle disputes peaceably without resorting to strikes. No strike may be called unless two-thirds of the members of the local involved vote for it. Permission must also be granted by the General Executive Board if any support is to be given by the central organization. At the 1920 convention a complaint was made that the higher paid workers always outvoted the lower paid and hence the requirement of a two-thirds vote for calling a strike prevented the lower paid from getting redress for their grievances. The con-

vention refused to change the provision, however. Strikes must be limited to the smallest number of establishments possible, so that the working members can assist the strikers.

Structure and Constitutional Provisions

The highest authority in the organization is the convention which is now held triennially. A referendum vote of the entire membership may be held if a majority of the delegates to the convention or three-quarters of the General Executive Board so desire. If any local can win the support of one-fourth of the total number of locals, it also may demand that the membership vote on a certain question, but there is no provision for an automatic referendum on all decisions of the convention, as is found in some unions. The general officers, however, are elected by the entire membership, after nomination by the convention, voting being compulsory. A general organizer, four general secretaries, and thirteen other representatives constitute the General Executive Board, which meets twice a year. Between times, the four secretaries and the four members of the Board who are residents of the place where the union headquarters are situated have power to transact necessary business.

The constitution provides that no local may initiate a member until work is found for him in the industries under the jurisdiction of the union. No clerks or foremen may be admitted. Every candidate must have his first citizenship papers and get his second as soon as possible. He must also be examined as to his competency in the trade and as to his character, and pay an initiation fee of not more than $11.[17] Only members may be employed

[17] Of this amount, $1 goes to the central organization. Monthly dues are at least 75 cents, of which 25 cents is paid to the central body.

in establishments which are allowed the union labels, except when no union men are available. Under such circumstances, special permits may be issued to non-members for a definite length of time. In dull seasons, members are to be laid off in rotation, no one longer than six days at a time, so that the hardship of unemployment may be equally shared.

Instead of forming mixed locals, made up of various types of workers, the usual policy of the union has been to organize drivers, bottlers, brewers, soda water workers, etc., separately, and then unite them by means of the joint boards for concerted action. No two locals of the same branch may exist in the same locality. The wide jurisdiction of the union at present makes possible a great variety of locals, including those of ice plant workers, tonic workers, creamery and dairy workers, rice mill workers, and linseed oil workers, as well as those which one would more naturally expect to find in the organization. The task of welding together these heterogeneous groups will not be an easy one. Nevertheless the union has a wide field before it, and ought in time to overcome the difficulties of its present position and become a powerful organization once more.

CHAPTER III

INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM AMONG THE COAL MINERS

Widespread Interest in Union

The United Mine Workers of America with its demand for nationalization of the mines and the six-hour day has received much attention from the general public in the last two years. The coal strike of November, 1919, checked with difficulty by federal injunction, the appointment of the Bituminous and Anthracite Coal Commissions by the President, the turbulent struggle in the West Virginia coal fields, the great strike of bituminous and anthracite coal miners beginning April 1, 1922—all these events and many more in the recent history of the miners have been heralded widely in the daily press. Not only does the organization afford an abundance of dramatic episodes, but it furnishes a most interesting example of an industrial union which was quite devoid of radical philosophy or class consciousness at the time of its formation, and has remained so in theory, but nevertheless has recently adopted a far-reaching program of industrial reconstruction. Not only does the demand for nationalization of the mines show a new attitude toward industrial problems, but an outspoken radical minority indicates that the union may give other signs of diminishing conservation in the near future. As this organization is the largest union affiliated with the A. F. of L., reporting a membership of 425,700, it is well worth careful study.

Early History

There were several attempts to organize the coal miners of the country before the formation of the United Mine Workers of America, in 1890. We cannot here describe the earliest unions that were formed, but must at least mention the Knights of Labor, which had considerable success among both bituminous and anthracite miners for a few years after 1879; the National Federation of Miners and Mine Laborers, which was formed in 1885 and soon established joint conferences with the operators of several states; and finally the National Progressive Union, which sprang up in 1889. A movement for consolidation on the part of the National Progressive Union and National Trades Assembly No. 135 of the K. of L. resulted in 1890 in the formation of the U. M. W., with a charter from the A. F. of L. The Trades Assembly remained part of the K. of L. for several years, however, having a double affiliation as did many locals of the brewery workers. A certain amount of friction between the two bodies persisted, as was true in the brewing industry, and eventually the Trades Assembly was dissolved. The new organization led a precarious existence for a number of years. The pouring in of cheap immigrant labor, largely of Slavs and Italians, depressed wages and led to the breakdown of the joint conference system which had been established. The keen competition brought about by the great increase in the labor supply was intensified by the depression of 1893 and thereafter, with the result that the organization was nearly wrecked. The successful strike in the bituminous fields in 1897 marked the turning point in the history of the union, however, and within five years it grew from one of the poorest to one of the strongest organizations in the country.[1] Since then

[1] Warne, *The Coal Mine Worker* (New York, 1905), p. 219.

its growth has been almost continuous to the present time. The interstate joint agreement was soon reestablished, and the union spread rapidly to other states.

The first serious attempt to organize the anthracite miners took place after the strike of 1897. The task of persuading the Slavs and Italians to join was a difficult one, but they were gradually drawn into the union, and soon after the strike of 1900 practically all the anthracite miners were members of the U. M. W., in spite of racial antipathies and social prejudices.[2] The bringing of immigrant competition under control in this way was considered a great triumph. In 1902 another great strike in the anthracite field broke out, after all attempts to get a conference with the employers had failed, and caused much public concern. After five months the operators agreed to submit the dispute to the arbitration of the Anthracite Coal Strike Commission appointed by President Roosevelt, and the award given by this Commission laid the foundation of a system which has done much to preserve peace in the anthracite regions. Besides increased wages and other improvements, it provided for a permanent Board of Conciliation, with representatives of each side, to settle any grievances that might arise, and for the appointment of an umpire if one should be necessary.

Loyalty to Contracts

The spirit of the organization was well illustrated in this strike by the decision that was made in regard to the cooperation which should be given by the bituminous miners. Many in the anthracite region hoped that they would join the strike, believing that their support was necessary if the union was to be saved. The bituminous miners, however, were bound by contracts with employ-

[2] Mitchell, *Organized Labor* (Philadelphia, 1903), p. 367.

ers which did not expire till the following spring, and although some argued that the preservation of the union was more important than holding to contracts, the special convention called to consider the matter decided by unanimous vote of both anthracite and bituminous delegates that these agreements should be kept. The bituminous miners voted to support the strike financially, but remained at work throughout the struggle. This loyalty to contracts has been characteristic of the union throughout its history. Although outlawed strikes have broken out occasionally, the membership in general as well as the officials have steadfastly maintained the sacredness of agreements, and have attributed much of their success to this policy. In this respect the coal miners' organization was in marked contrast to that of the metal miners in its early days. John Mitchell, who was president of the U. M. W. from 1898-1908, did much to impress upon his union the necessity of keeping contracts inviolate, and for this was often criticized by officials of the Western Federation of Miners. Even in the strike of 1919 the coal miners believed that they were living up to the spirit of their contract, which was to run till the end of the war or to March, 1920, as for all practical purposes the war was plainly at an end.

The Interstate Joint Agreement

The Interstate Joint Agreement for bituminous miners, in what is known as the Central Competitive Field, including Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and West Virginia, has for many years been one of the conspicuous features of the union. At the biennial convention of the international organization, a scale committee makes recommendations in regard to wages and working conditions, which are usually adopted by the union. Soon after the convention these recommendations are brought before a joint conference of

operators and miners in the Central Field, which has four representatives from each side from each state. If no agreement is reached here, the demands of the miners are referred to a sub-committee, made up of a smaller number from each side, which comes to some decision. The report of this committee is adopted by the Joint Conference and carried out unless repudiated by a referendum of the miners or by a reconvened convention. The Policy Committee of the union, made up of district presidents, decides whether or not to submit the agreement to a referendum vote. The interstate contract thus established runs for two years. Formerly it was the habit for the miners to suspend work during the formation of new contracts, but in 1916 it was decided, in spite of considerable opposition, that work should continue without interruption while the new agreement was being made.[3]

The Interstate Agreement is somewhat general in its provisions, and leaves many details in regard to working conditions to be decided by the separate districts. After the Interstate Joint Conference is over, the miners and operators of the different districts meet and make agreements in regard to various details, such as prices charged for rent and house coal, methods of paying wages, etc. In some cases sub-district agreements are made also, and even local agreements when conditions differ in different mines. None of these may conflict with the Interstate Agreement, however, or increase the cost of production without general consent. The contracts always provide for the "check-off" system, by which all union dues and assessments are deducted from the wages of the miners by the operators and turned over to the union directly. This system of course puts the union in a very strong

[3] *Proceedings of the 25th Consecutive and 2nd Biennial Convention* of the United Mine Workers of America, 1916, pp. 620-66.

position, as it forces all workers to become members. The union claims that it also benefits employers, by helping to enforce compliance with contracts, and by preventing unauthorized strikes. The agreements also make provision for the settlement of all disputes that may arise. If any miner believes himself to have been unjustly discharged, or if he has any other grievance, he may present his case to the Pit Committee, made up of representatives of the leading nationalities in his own mine. If the Pit Committee is unable to settle the difficulty with the mine boss, the case is referred to the president of the sub-district, or some district official, who takes it up with the mine management or one of the commissioners appointed to handle disputes. If necessary the matter may then be referred to a joint board, with representatives of both sides (in Illinois) or may be submitted to arbitration. In several states outside of the Central Territory, joint conferences of operators and miners draw up state agreements which are somewhat similar to those already described. These contracts have done a great deal to maintain peace in the industry and bring about fair treatment and greater security of position.

Structure of the Union

The U. M. W. is divided into thirty districts, each of which has its own constitution, officials and convention, and its own representatives on the Executive Board of the international union. The districts may subdivide their own territory as they see fit, though charters are issued and revoked only by the international union. All locals, sub-districts, and districts are subject to the rulings of the International Executive Board. In 1910 the president complained in his report to the convention that in some districts there was a growing disposition to ignore

the authority of the central organization, and even to advocate district autonomy. An indication of the same disposition is seen in some of the illegal strikes of the last few years. No local strikes may be called without the authority of the District Executive Board, and no strikes involving the majority of the workers in a district may be called without sanction of the International Executive Board or convention. A general strike may only be called after a referendum of the entire membership.

A referendum is also necessary for levying assessments for more than two months, and for electing officers, and may sometimes be used in ratifying agreements, but less stress is put upon it than in some other unions. The Socialist Labor Party in its propaganda among the miners criticizes the U. M. W. for this reason and urges that its constitution be amended so as to place the power in the hands of the rank and file.[4] The biennial convention is the principal power in the international organization, and may amend the constitution by only a majority vote. The delegates to this convention are elected directly by the local unions, according to the number of their members. Special conventions may be called on the request of five or more districts, or on order of the Executive Board. The convention is the final court of appeal from decisions of the subordinate branches, although an individual may not carry his case beyond the District Executive Board unless his membership is at stake.

The smallest unit in the organization is the local, which is usually composed of the employees of a single mine. If the number in each one is small, two or more neighboring mines may combine in forming a local, however. Formerly a number of locals might be organized in a large mine, according to nationality, language, or place

[4] *The Mines to the Miners*, published by the Nat. Ex. Com. of the S. L. P.

of residence, in case the workers were scattered in nearby towns, but the constitution now forbids the formation of more than one in a mine. All crafts are united in the same local. An attempt was made in 1910 to provide that those who were not miners—coal hoisting engineers, machinists, etc.—should elect delegates of their own craft to represent them at the convention, but this was voted down. All delegates are elected irrespective of occupation. All miners, mine laborers, and other workmen employed in and around the coal mines, coal washers, and coke ovens of the American continent, regardless of race, nationality, or degree of skill, are eligible for membership, with the exception of people who hold supervisory positions, or are engaged in the sale of liquors, or are members of the Civic Federation,[5] on the one hand, or of the Industrial Workers of the World or the One Big Union, on the other. The initiation fee for practical miners is $10, but members' sons who are between fourteen and seventeen years old may be admitted free. Inexperienced miners are subject to the regulations of the district where application for membership is made. Local dues are not less than 75 cents a month, of which 50 cents go to the central organization, but boys under sixteen and decrepit or disabled members pay only half that amount.

Difficulties with Coal Hoisting Engineers

The U. M. W. has had less trouble than the United Brewery Workers in establishing its jurisdiction over all workers in the industry, but it has not been wholly free from disputes with other organizations. For the first few

[5] John Mitchell, for several years president of the union, was one of the leading spirits in the Civic Federation in its early days, but as time went on the miners' organization grew more and more distrustful of that attempt to unite employers and workers, as some bitter enemies of unions were active in it, and finally passed a constitutional amendment prohibiting membership in the Federation.

years it made little attempt to organize workmen in the industry who were not miners or their helpers. At the 1901 convention, President Mitchell spoke of the necessity of having all employees in and around the coal mines in one organization. At that time engineers, firemen, and blacksmiths connected with some mines were members of their own trade unions, and when they went on strike all the miners in the locality were thrown out of work. The fact that the U. M. W. controlled such an overwhelming proportion of the employees in and around the coal mines made it necessary that it should be the sole judge of what strikes should occur, so that less than 3 per cent of the employees should no longer be able to tie up all operations, Mitchell declared. The same year the A. F. of L. convention made the declaration on industrial unionism, quoted in an earlier chapter, which confirmed this point of view, and granted the U. M. W. jurisdiction over all workers in the industry. Not all the craft unions were ready to accept this decision, however. In 1902, Mitchell reported that the International Association of Stationary Firemen had induced a few hundred firemen in the anthracite regions to secede from the U. M. W. and go on strike for the eight-hour day, without consulting the miners' union, thereby throwing 50,000 miners out of work. The strike failed, and the officials of the U. M. W. had to intercede for the firemen's reinstatement in the employ of the company. The National Brotherhood of Coal Hoisting Engineers caused the miners considerable trouble for a few years. The engineers considered that they belonged to a separate craft and demanded an organization of their own. The Mine Workers were determined to force them into their union, however, and succeeded in persuading the A. F. of L. to revoke the charter of the Brotherhood. The Coal Hoisting Engineers were to be admitted into the

U. M. W. without initiation fee, and were to have a district charter from that body. The engineers by referendum refused almost unanimously to accept this decision, and were expelled from the A. F. of L. in 1903. For a year or two longer they continued to interfere with the U. M. W., but the larger organization was soon able to control engineering work in practically all of the coal mines where its members were employed. The U. M. W. also had some friction with the Western Federation of Miners, which for awhile tried to organize coal miners as well as metal miners, but an amicable settlement of this difficulty was reached before long. The relations of these two mining organizations are described in the next chapter. With these few exceptions the U. M. W. has been practically free from disputes of this character.

Character of Membership

The organization now includes workers in about fifty different occupations—carpenters, machinists, masons, blacksmiths, car couplers, car loaders, dumpers, drivers, stablemen, pumpmen, water boilers, shaft repairmen, watchmen, laborers, slate pickers, and many other types of workers besides regular miners.[6] The majority of these are relatively unskilled, and a large proportion of them are of foreign birth. In 1910, President Lewis reported that at least one-third of the 700,000 mine workers in the United States did not speak English.[7] A few years later it was decided to print Italian and Slavish sections in the *U. M. W. Journal* and since then many other nationalities have demanded to have sections printed in their tongues as well. The Lithuanians complained at the 1918 convention that they were being discriminated

[6] Warne, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

[7] *Proceedings of the 21st Annual Convention*, U. M. W., 1910, p. 69.

against, and Hungarians, Poles, and Russians joined in the plea for articles in their own languages. It has not yet seemed possible to arrange for so many foreign sections in the journal, however. At the 1918 convention a resolution stating that all "enemy aliens" should be deposed from the union, and no documents dealing with union affairs should be printed in their languages during the war, was voted down on the ground that many of the Bohemians, Slavs, and Czechs in the coal mines were loyal to the United States but had not been here long enough to become naturalized. The recommendation of the president that a committee be appointed to aid the large number of members who were not citizens to become naturalized was adopted, and the following year a resolution was passed requiring all members or applicants for membership to take steps toward becoming citizens as soon as possible. Although there has been some friction between the different nationalities, on the whole the U. M. W. has had great success in welding together the heterogeneous groups employed in the industry, and forming a compact and powerful organization of them.

Colorado Strike

It is impossible in the compass of this book to trace even briefly the history of the United Mine Workers in their struggles to organize the different coal regions and establish just conditions of work, but a few of the most important events must be mentioned. The great strike in Colorado, lasting from September, 1913, to December, 1914, was one of the most dramatic conflicts in the labor movement. It arose as a protest against the economic, social, and political domination of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, and certain smaller mining companies in the region. This domination manifested itself in the ruth-

less suppression of unionism by means of spies, summary discharge, and blacklists; in the control of living conditions in mining communities through company ownership of houses, stores, and churches; and in the control of public officials and the machinery of the law in the interest of the companies.[8] When discontent among the miners became so great that an outbreak was inevitable, the U. M. W. furnished leadership and financial assistance to the hitherto unorganized workers in their fight for improved conditions. The enforcement of the state labor laws in regard to the eight-hour day and other matters, the right to have checkweighmen to prevent cheating in the weighing of coal on which the miners' pay was based, the right to trade at any store they pleased and to choose their own boarding places and doctor, the abolition of the armed guards about the camps, recognition of the union, and increase in wages, were the specific ends sought in this conflict, as in many others which have been fought by the coal miners. The story of the brutality of company guards and militia, culminating in the burning of the Ludlow tent colony in which the wives and children of multitudes of strikers had taken refuge, and the death of several of these women and children in the fire, have often been told and need not be repeated here. The bitterness caused by this event, coupled with the killing of several of the strikers, precipitated bloody warfare between the two sides which was only checked by the coming of federal troops ten days later. The strike was finally lost, although certain improvements followed through the introduction by the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company of a new plan for giving the workers a voice in determining work conditions.

[8] See U. S. Com. on Industrial Relations, *Report on the Colorado Strike*, 1915, by G. P. West, for a full account of the situation.

Struggle in West Virginia

West Virginia has for over twenty years been the scene of a struggle in the coal mines, which has repeatedly blazed out into violence. In the spring of 1912 an important strike broke out there and lasted for nearly sixteen months. This conflict, like many others which have been waged by the miners, was characterized by the use of gunmen, the declaring of martial law, and the suspension of constitutional rights of the miners. Such notoriety resulted from the methods used to crush the strike, that an investigation into these methods and the whole system of company guards was authorized by the United States Senate. At various other times in the last two decades the fundamental conflict between the miners and the operators has broken out into open warfare. Readers of the daily press in 1920 and 1921 are familiar with the stories of violence connected with the most recent outbreak in the West Virginia coal fields, in which many men on both sides lost their lives. It is a mountainous country where feuds are prevalent and the habit of settling differences with the gun widespread, so when the armed guards of a detective agency, in the pay of the operators, have evicted miners and their families from their homes, they have been met with armed resistance.

The fundamental issue in this region is the question of unionism. Many mine owners have long been trying to prevent the U. M. W. from extending their organization in this state, and to this end have forced their employees to sign anti-union contracts, pledging themselves not to join any union nor to aid and encourage the organizing of other workers even after their own term of employment is over. Not content with forcing contracts of this sort, at least forty-six coal companies have recently secured injunctions from judges of the State Supreme

Court of Appeals, restraining all union representatives from attempting to persuade their employees to break these contracts and join the union.[9] The right to prohibit any attempt to organize workers who had been forced to sign such contracts was upheld by the Supreme Court of the United States in the Hitchman Case in 1917. Besides using these powerful weapons, some of the operators pay the salaries of deputy sheriffs, who help in keeping the county free of unionism by clubbing union members and running organizers out of the district, according to Mr. Winthrop Lane who has recently made a careful study of the situation.[10] The operators object to the union because of its insistence on the closed shop and the check-off system, and also because of the numerous stoppages of work which they claim occur in certain mines in violation of contracts. These stoppages Mr. Lane found to have taken place in spite of the earnest efforts of the union officials to prevent them, however. Although the operators have done their best to check the speed of unionism, the U. M. W. membership in the state has grown from 6,000 in 1917, to 53,000 today, Mr. Lane states.[11]

Court Decisions

A hard blow has recently been struck at the union by an injunction issued by Judge Anderson of the federal court in Indianapolis, in October, 1921, forbidding the organization of the non-union fields in West Virginia, and enjoining all coal operators in Indiana from continuing the check-off of union dues from the wages which they paid. The reason given for this action was that the funds collected by this system were being used for the unlawful purpose of organizing non-union mines and thus interfer-

[9] Lane, *Civil War in West Virginia* (New York, 1921), p. 69.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 52.
[11] *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.

ing with interstate commerce. Spontaneous strikes of protest at once broke out in various places, but were stopped by the action of the Chicago Court of Appeals in suspending the prohibition of the check-off till a thorough hearing of the case might be held. As the check-off system has been for many years an integral part of union contracts in the coal fields, an adverse decision on this question would be a staggering blow to the organizaton. The Court of Appeals later reversed this part of Judge Anderson's decree.

The U. M. W., like various other unions, has had to fight a number of lawsuits in recent years. One of the most important of these, the Coronado case, is still pending. The Coronado Coal Company in Arkansas brought suit against the union in 1914 for conspiring to prevent shipment of their coal in interstate commerce, by trying to organize non-union workers and supporting them in a strike.[12] The Federal District Court awarded the company $200,000 damages, which were automatically tripled under the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. This decision was sustained by the Federal Circuit Court of Appeals, and interest added, so that the award against the union amounted to $625,000. The organization appealed to the Supreme Court of the United States, but was required to deposit a bond for $800,000 meanwhile. If the highest court sustains this award, it will be another serious blow to the union, and because of the principle involved will be a setback to all organized labor.

Causes of 1919 Strike

The first general strike covering all the organized bituminous coal fields of the country was called for

[12] *Report of the Proceedings of the 39th Annual Convention* of the American Federation of Labor, 1919, p. 100.

November 1, 1919. To understand the reasons for this much criticized move we must go back to the wage agreement which was formulated in Washington early in 1918 and ratified by the U. M. W. convention soon afterwards. This agreement was to run for the duration of the war, or until March 31, 1920. Among its provisions was the so-called "penalty clause" which provided that a fine should automatically be levied upon all miners guilty of striking in violation of the agreement. No strike might take place till established methods of dealing with grievances had been exhausted. A bitter debate took place in the 1918 convention over this clause, but the officers urged that it be accepted because of the increase in wages that went with it. They insisted that it was necessary for the good name of the organization, which was being attacked by non-union employers because of the recurrence of illegal local strikes, and succeeded in persuading a large majority to vote for it. There were many protests, however. One delegate from Illinois who objected vigorously to the stand taken by the officials in this matter said: "The intelligence and the brains and the backbone of union labor do not rest in the suitcase of a labor leader, it rests in the rank and file. . . . We have a bunch of thinking men down there; we have not allowed our officials or any one else to do our thinking for us." [13] This speech may perhaps be considered a forecast of the insurgent movement which took place in Illinois the following summer in rebellion against this penalty clause. The feeling against the agreement grew rapidly as the time went on, especially as month after month dragged on after the Armistice without bringing the signing of peace appreciably nearer. The cost of living had increased so

[13] *Proceedings of the 26th Consecutive and 3rd Biennial Convention*, U. M. W., 1918, p. 435.

that the Washington wage settlement no longer seemed adequate, yet the request sent to Mr. Garfield, the Fuel Administrator, for a revision of the bituminous wage scale, was refused. The giving up of wartime control over maximum prices of coal by the government on February 1, 1919, and the discontinuance of the U. S. Fuel Administration, which was one of the parties to the Washington agreement, on June 30, 1919, increased the feeling of unrest among the miners. If the war was over as far as restrictions on operators were concerned, it was also over as far as their contract was concerned, and they should no longer be bound by its provisions, they argued. The officials of the union were reluctant to yield to the demand of the rank and file for the abrogation of the agreement in the fall of 1919, but were forced to do so by the insistent pressure that came from all parts of the country. Accordingly, when the miners' convention assembled in Cleveland in September, 1919, Acting President Lewis recommended that the contract be terminated on November 1, and that the penalty clause be omitted from the new agreement that should be made.

Demands of Convention

This convention of 1919 was a notable one. It was distinctly a gathering of the rank and file who were determined to speak their own minds and not yield to any domination by officials. According to Mr. Heber Blankenhorn, 90 per cent of the delegates came straight from the mines and looked the part, with their corncob pipes and shirtsleeves.[14] The appearance of the gathering was in marked contrast to that of the A. F. of L. convention of the preceding June, where paid union officials rather than workers predominated. "This is to be a convention

[14] *Nation*, September 27, 1919, "The Miners at Cleveland."

of the men from the picks this time," said one of the delegates in urging that the convention rules as recommended by the Rules Committee be amended to read that 250 members rather than 500 might demand a roll-call.[15] This amendment was passed on the ground that the Committee was trying to centralize power in the hands of the officials. The principal thing done by the convention was to decide that a new agreement must be reached with the operators before November 1. If the operators were unwilling to come to a satisfactory agreement with them, a general strike of bituminous coal miners throughout the country was to begin on that date. The program advanced by the Policy Committee was adopted as a basis for negotiation. The principal demands to be presented to the operators were for the six-hour day, the five-day week, 60 per cent increase in wages, the weekly pay day, and abolition of the penalty clause. This demand for the thirty-hour week, vehemently condemned by the general public, was due not so much to the desire for greater leisure as to the desire for more regular work. Evidence later presented to the Bituminous Coal Commission showed that the miners were already working less than thirty hours a week on an average throughout the year, because of the large amount of unemployment in the industry. The Commission reported that on the average the number of idle days out of the possible working ones was 93 during the past thirty years, and in 1919 was 115.[16] This large amount of lost time, which was a serious hardship to the miners, was due partly to the overdevelopment of the industry resulting in the opening of many mines that would be unnecessary if all should be worked to their

[15] *Proceedings of the 27th Consecutive and 4th Biennial Convention*, U. M. W., 1919, p. 23.

[16] *Award and Recommendations of the Bituminous Coal Commission*, 1920, pp. 25-26.

fullest capacity, and partly to the irregular demand for coal throughout the year. This irregular demand resulted in periods of unemployment, followed by periods when as much coal was mined as could be transported by the available coal cars. The shortage of coal cars intensified the evils of irregular work. The demand for a regular working week of thirty hours was an attempt on the part of the miners to distribute the available amount of work as evenly as possible throughout the year.

Injunction vs. the Strike

The convention voted that the Scale Committee make an effort to negotiate a new agreement with the operators, presenting these demands as a starting point for discussion, and that it refer back to a special convention any settlement which might be agreed upon, for ratification. At the Joint Wage Conference held in the Central Competitive Field immediately after the convention, all the demands of the miners were denied and no counter proposition was made, except to continue the old agreement till March 31, 1920. According to the decision of the convention, the officers of the union therefore had no alternative but to call the strike. The Secretary of Labor tried to bring the two sides together but failed, and on November 1 all the soft coal miners in the union laid down their tools. It was, as has been said, the first general strike of soft coal miners that had been called in the United States. Just as it was beginning, an injunction was issued by Judge Anderson of the U. S. District Court in Indianapolis prohibiting all officials of the organization from doing anything toward carrying on the strike, however. In spite of this the miners remained out, so on November 8 a second injunction was issued ordering the union officials to cancel the strike

order and direct their members to return to work. This action on the part of the federal authorities was based on the contention that the strike was in violation of the Lever law prohibiting any interference with the production of coal during the war. After a prolonged meeting of the Executive Board and the presidents of the different districts and other officers, lasting from 10 A.M. Monday to 4 A.M. Tuesday, President Lewis of the international organization issued an order rescinding the strike, on November 11. President Farrington of District 12 and President Howat of District 14 and a few others favored disregarding the injunction and taking the consequences, but the majority advocated a more prudent course of action. These injunctions roused great bitterness among the rank and file in the union, and many felt indignant that their officers should have been so cowardly as to yield to what they considered most unjust commands. Others declared that the officers had merely taken a canny step in obeying the order to cancel the strike, knowing that the mass of miners would refuse to return to work anyway. So strong was the conviction on the part of the members of the union that the strike was just and necessary, that large numbers of them remained out for some time after the recall order was issued.

Temper of the Rank and File

The general temper of the rank and file at this time was well illustrated at the special convention of the Pennsylvania State Federation of Labor in Pittsburgh in the early days of November, which was attended by the writer. A large representation from the U. M. W. was of course present, and when a resolution protesting against Judge Anderson's injunction and upholding the strike of the miners was introduced, it was passed almost

unanimously. One former member of the U. M. W. who opposed the resolution on the ground that it was defying the government was howled down in a wild uproar. The crowd seemed about ready to lynch him and was with difficulty restrained by the president of the Federation. The mine workers were not at war with the government but only with the illegal methods of some government agents, many of them declared. Early in December, eighty-four representatives of the union were indicted for disobeying the injunction in regard to ending the strike, and were put under heavy bonds. It was charged that the recall notice had been issued without the official seal of the union, and hence was disregarded by many. Strike benefits were said to have been paid by some locals, also. Most of the cases were continued indefinitely, however, as the miners in general had gone back to work by the time the cases came up in court, on December 16, due to the issuance of special orders by the Policy Committee of the union. President Howat of Kansas was held in jail for not ordering his men back to work, and 3,000 Kansas miners at once walked out on strike in protest against his imprisonment.[17] Before long he promised to obey the court, however, and was released.

Bituminous Coal Commission

Meanwhile unsuccessful attempts to bring about a settlement of the main points at issue had been made by Mr. Wilson, the Secretary of Labor, who suggested a 31 per cent increase in wages, and Mr. Garfield, the Fuel

[17] Since then Howat has won notoriety for his persistent defiance of the Kansas Industrial Court law, and his sentence to prison because of it. His continued refusal to order back to work certain miners who had struck in violation of contract, even when directed to do so by the national convention, resulted in his suspension in October, 1921. Large numbers of the Kansas miners, who were striking in protest against his imprisonment, continued to support him, however, and refused to recognize the provisional president appointed by Lewis in his place.

Administrator, who advocated a raise of 14 per cent. Both sides finally agreed to accept the decision of the Bituminous Coal Commission, which President Wilson offered to appoint, and this Commission, which had one representative of each side and one of the general public, made its award in March, 1920, after lengthy hearings and examination of the elaborate statistics presented by both sides. The miners as well as the operators engaged the services of distinguished economists and statisticians to present their cases. The Commissioners exonerated the miners from the charge of laziness brought against them by the operators, who claimed that much of their idleness was due to unwillingness to work all the available time. They pointed out that although some irregularity of habits existed among the men, it was due more to the psychological effect of not being allowed to work every day than to anything else. Knowing that the total number of days worked in the year would be approximately the same anyway, the miners felt that it made little difference if they did take voluntary holidays once in a while. Although appreciating the hardships due to the lack of steady work, the majority of the Commission was unwilling to recommend the six-hour day, however, as it maintained that this would be no remedy for the situation. During the rush season it was necessary for the miners to work full time, and restricting the number of their hours would result merely in the opening of new mines, and the drawing of new men into the industry, which would make the situation worse in the long run, it claimed. The Majority Report recommended that certain steps be taken to regularize employment in the industry, but had no power to put such recommendations into effect. It provided, however, for Joint Commissions to consider problems connected with competitive relations,

"differentials" as to working conditions in different districts, etc., and for tribunals to settle future disputes. Details of the award were to be worked out by the Joint Scale Committees. An increase of 27 per cent in wages was granted to the "tonnage" men (those who were paid according to the amount of coal turned out), but only 20 per cent to the men who were paid on the time basis, on the ground that the latter had had a greater increase than the former previous to this.

The representative of the miners on the Commission, a former president of the union, brought in a Minority Report, maintaining that the thirty-hour week was a necessary measure, not merely for regularizing employment, but also in order that the basis of pay might be determined on the theory that thirty hours of work rather than forty-eight was all that the miner could expect on the average.[18] The Minority Report condemned the discrimination made between the tonnage men and the time workers, and various other decisions of the Majority of the Commission. The award was unsatisfactory to the miners in many ways, as the wage was still far from adequate for the cost of living, and no solution of the fundamental difficulties of the situation was offered. Nevertheless a joint conference of bituminous miners and operators signed a two-year agreement based upon this award on March 31, 1920—an agreement which included among other things the much hated penalty clause for stoppages of work.

Insurgent Strike

Although the award was accepted by the officials there were certain groups within the union who went on strike

[18] *Award and Recommendations of the Bituminous Coal Commission*, 1920, pp. 83-84.

in protest against it. Illinois miners who were paid by the day went out in the week of July 19, and the tonnage men had to follow, so mines were shut down all over the state. President Farrington had been opposed to submitting the case to the Commission in the first place, and when the strike occurred he hurried to confer with the Illinois operators in regard to an increase in wages without even consulting Lewis, the international president. The strike was condemned by the *U. M. W. Journal* as a flagrant breach of contract, but when Ohio and Indiana also made new demands, President Lewis was forced to take action. Due to his request, President Wilson called a new conference with the operators in the Central Field. This new conference soon broke up, however, and the miners in the different states then began to seek separate agreements, which they succeeded in making in some cases, thus putting aside for the time being the principle of the collective agreement for the whole central territory.[19] The miners were not the only ones to whom the decision of the Commission was distasteful, however, for the six months' strike in Alabama, beginning in September, 1920, was due to the refusal of the operators there to carry out the recommendations which it had made.

Unrest among Anthracite Miners

The anthracite miners, meanwhile, had decided to let their contract continue till it naturally expired in March, 1920. At that time they made demands similar to those of the bituminous miners, and failed to recall any agreement with the operators. Accordingly an Anthracite Coal Commission was appointed by President Wilson to

[19] *Survey*, Sept. 1, 1920, "The Illinois Miners."
The refusal of the operators of the Central Field to negotiate for a new joint agreement for the whole territory in March, 1922, helped precipitate the strike which began in April.

decide the questions at issue. This Commission also failed to agree, and the Majority Report was most unacceptable to the miners. As soon as it was made public, a group of insurgents in District No. 1 sent word to President Wilson that they would strike if he did not endorse the Minority rather than the Majority Report. This he was naturally quite unwilling to do, as both sides had promised beforehand to accept the award of the Commission. An agreement based on the Majority decision was signed by the Tri-district Scale Committee on September 2, 1920, but at the same time this committee asked that the case be reopened. Meanwhile a large group of insurgents—according to the *New York Times,* more than 80,000 out of the 175,000 men employed in the three anthracite districts [20]—went out on a "vacation," in an effort to force the acceptance of their demands as expressed in the Minority Report. This action was strongly condemned by the union officials, who succeeded in getting most of the men back to work before October 1. The great dissatisfaction with the award caused the case to be reopened, however, and joint conferences between operators and miners were held in an effort to adjust difficulties.

Demand for Nationalization of Mines

As has already been stated, the U. M. W. has in the past been considered one of the most conservative of unions. Unlike most other industrial unions, it has no sign of class consciousness in the preamble to its constitution, or any indication in the statement of its aims that it hopes for any radical change in the basis of our industrial life. Nevertheless in adopting a resolution in favor of the nationalization of the mines at the 1919 convention,

[20] *New York Times,* Sept. 1, 1920.

the union committed itself to a policy which may prove most significant for the future of the mining industry. This step, which had been recommended by President Hayes and approved by the Policy Committee early in 1919, was doubtless due partly to the example of the British miners; yet the chaotic conditions of the industry here in America helped convince the members of the union that a radical reconstruction was necessary. Eleven different resolutions on the subject were introduced at the convention, but the one which was unanimously passed after only a short debate was a substitute one submitted by the Committee on Resolutions. It read in part as follows:

Coal mining is a basic industry, indispensable to the economic life of the nation, and to the well being of the nation's citizens. The all important coal resources of our country are owned and controlled by private interests. Under the prevailing system of private ownership coal is mined primarily for the purpose of creating profits for the coal owners. The production of coal under this system is characterized by an appalling economic waste. The incomparable natural resources of America, and particularly those of timber and coal, are being despoiled under a system of production which wastes from 33 to 50% of these resources in order that the maximum dividends may accrue to those capitalists who have secured ownership of these indispensable commodities.

We hold that the coal supply of our nation should be owned by the commonwealth and operated in the interest of, and for the use and comfort of, all the people of the commonwealth. . . .

Our coal resources are the birthright of the American people for all time to come and we hold that it is the immediate duty of the American people to prevent the profligate waste that is taking place under private ownership of these resources by having the government take such steps as may be necessary providing for the nationalization of the coal mining industry of the United States.

Under private ownership, where production is conducted for private gain, the spirit of the times seems to be: After us the Deluge. This must be supplanted by a system where production

will be for use and the common good, and economic waste will give way to conservation of the nation's heritage in the interest of posterity.[21]

As will be noticed, the principal reason given for their demand for nationalization of the mines was not that their own interests would thereby be furthered, but that the American people as a whole would profit by a change to a system where production would not be for private profit but for the common good. The resolution ordered that a bill be presented to Congress, providing that the United States government purchase all coal properties in the country and operate the industry, and that the mine workers be given "equal representation" on the commissions which should administer the affairs of the industry, or a least those which dealt with wages and working conditions. In the brief discussion that followed the introduction of this resolution, at least one delegate emphasized the necessity of keeping the right to strike even if the mines were taken over by the government. That of course raises the question of what the effect of government ownership would be upon the miners if it were combined with the loss of the right to strike. The union certainly has not taken kindly to the Kansas law requiring that disputes be settled by the Industrial Court rather than by strikes, or to other instances of government interference with its affairs. The attitude of the miners toward the actual nationalization of the mines would depend largely on the degree to which they were given a voice in the administration of the mines—as was brought out when the subject was first introduced at the 1918 convention. A resolution introduced at the 1919 convention by one of the Illinois delegates providing

[21] *Proceedings* of the U. M. W. Convention, 1919, p. 842.

that the government take over all industry for the benefit of all the people and "eliminate the curse known as profit,'" was promptly voted down by the delegates. They were there to accomplish certain definite things for their own industry, but were not in the mood for general Socialistic declarations.[22]

Mixture of Conservatism and Radicalism

The delegates at the convention passed a resolution endorsing the Plumb Plan for government ownership and democratic operation of the railroads, and pledging their support to it, and also voted to instruct their officials to confer with railroad unions in order to bring about an alliance similar to that of Britain.[23] Another interesting decision was one in favor of calling a conference of representatives of various unions to consider organizing a labor party representative of workers of both hand and brain.[24] To this conference the cooperative movement and the Non-Partisan League were to be invited to send delegates. A similar resolution in favor of a labor party had been voted down in 1909. The convention of 1919 also declared for the repeal of the Espionage Act and for the withdrawal of troops from Russia, and applauded vigorously a radical speech by Seymour Stedman, now one of the leaders of the Socialist Party. On the other hand, their traditional conservatism manifested itself by voting down all communistic or "one-big-union" proposals. A resolution introduced by a Montana local favoring breaking away

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[22] It is interesting to note that a typical Socialist resolution in favor of public ownership and democratic management of all the means of production and exchange that are collectively used, was passed by the U. M. W. convention ten years before, though it was evidently not taken very seriously. (*Proceedings of* 1909 *Convention,* p. 421.)

[23] *Proceedings* of the U. M. W. Convention, 1919, p. 393-94.

[24] *Ibid.,* p. 869.

from the A. F. of L., as it had "never at any time been of any benefit to the U. M. W., or the working men of America," and as "no man worthy the name of labor leader would accept a salary of $10,000 a year while members of the Federation are in many cases receiving less than $500" was sharply attacked and voted down almost unanimously.[25] The same local presented another resolution declaring for one big union of all the working men and women of the United States, which met with a similar fate. Furthermore, District 18 which had affiliated with the Canadian One Big Union was expelled from the organization uncompromisingly. The constitution was also amended so as to require the expulsion of all members of the One Big Union, as well as of the Industrial Workers of the World and other "dual" organizations not affiliated with the A. F. of L., from membership in the U. M. W., and to debar them permanently from holding office in the union even if they should be readmitted to it. Although the miners were ready to take some rather radical steps, they insisted that those steps should be taken within the A. F. of L., not outside it.

Nationalization Campaign

In spite of the declaration in favor of the nationalization of the mines, little was heard from the organization on the subject until the next convention. The administration quietly ignored the matter, much to the disgust of some of the more radical members of the union. In December, 1920, Mr. Enoch Williams, leader of the insurgent group in the anthracite fields, wrote a series of articles for the Federated Press attacking the national officials of the U. M. W. for so disregarding the wishes

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 580.

of the rank and file. He maintained that the desire for nationalization was widespread among the members, yet since this policy was officially adopted not one article on the subject had been allowed to appear in the official journal, and all letters from miners which dealt with the question had been suppressed.[26] This may be due to the fact that President Lewis is less in sympathy with the platform of nationalization than was his predecessor who formulated it. At the 1921 convention, however, the union reaffirmed the stand which had been taken in regard to government ownership of the mines two years before and appointed a committee to draft a bill providing for it. The committee was also empowered to carry on a campaign of education in regard to nationalization, through the columns of the *Miners' Journal* and by means of published pamphlets. The chairman of this committee is John Brophy, president of District No. 2.

District No. 2 had already taken a decided stand on this issue at a special convention held in February, 1921. President Brophy presented a program of education in regard to the need for nationalization, and this program was adopted after thorough discussion, point by point. It recognized that a campaign of education among the miners was necessary if they were really to understand the larger issues facing the union, so pamphlets were to be prepared by the district dealing with such subjects as the mismanagement of the mines, unreasonable profits, workers' control, and nationalization. Discussion classes and a labor paper were to aid in spreading the information obtained by experts who were to be employed to study the industry. According to President Brophy, the plan for nationalization will remain only a "pious hope and a vague aspiration until the rank and file know what the

[26] *British Columbia Federationist*, Dec. 10, 1920.

program means, why it is needed here and now, and how to get it." [27] Instead of putting all its energies to securing redress of small grievances, the union should work for such a reconstruction of the industry as will cut out waste, unemployment, and exorbitant prices, he maintains. A more rational plan for production, more continuous operation of the mines that are essential for satisfying the demand, elimination of the great waste of opening new ones which are not needed, lower prices, and better conditions for the miners, will result from nationalization, President Brophy believes.[28] This movement for education of the rank and file in regard to such matters is most significant, for only when the workers have obtained a thorough understanding of the industry in which they work can they hope for any considerable share in its control. The appointment of President Brophy as chairman of the new national committee on government ownership promises more energetic action than has yet been taken in the direction of nationalization of the mines.

Internal Dissensions

Dissatisfaction with the conservative policies of the Lewis administration caused the election of international officers in December, 1920, to be hotly contested. Robert Harlin of Seattle and Alexander Howat of Kansas, both of whom are distinctly more radical than Lewis or Murray, fought their reelection to the presidency and vice-presidency, and won the backing of some of the more conservative members of the union (such as Farrington of Illinois) as well as of the radicals. Nevertheless the old officials were victorious by a large majority. At the national convention in 1921 the opponents of the adminis-

[27] *New York Call*, May 12, 1921, p. 5.
[28] *Survey*, March 12, 1921, p. 845.

tration did their best to block all measures approved by the president, and although Lewis won on practically every issue, they put up a bitter fight against him. Part of this opposition was due merely to personal rivalry, but there is a vigorous and outspoken minority which is honestly opposed to the ruling policies of the organization, and condemns what it considers the truckling to government on the part of the officials. Connivance between the coal operators and the officials of the union is also charged, and the fact that many former representatives of the union have accepted well-paid positions with the operators is repeatedly stressed, with the implication that while still in the employ of the union they were working in the interests of the companies. Mr. Enoch Williams in his articles in the Federated Press charges that the interference of the coal operators in union affairs is at the bottom of the discontent among the rank and file. There is talk in mining towns of various officials who have been elected by corporation influence, or who have "sold out" the rank and file for their own advantage, he declares.[29] Such charges have been made against officials in earlier years also—and, on the other hand, officials have repeatedly complained of conspiracies seeking to destroy the union by hampering the administration and advising secession. The great difference in economic status between officials and members of the union helps to create a gulf between them, so that innumerable misunderstandings arise, and in some cases there may be actual corruption, but the sweeping charges of Mr. Williams are probably exaggerated. Nevertheless they indicate a spirit of unrest within the organization that should not be ignored.

[29] *New York Call*, Dec. 7, 8, 1920.

Insurgent Movement in Illinois

The insurgent movement in Illinois in 1919 affords an interesting illustration of the conflicting currents within the union. As has been said, its immediate cause was the levying of fines upon miners who went out on strike. Many of the Illinois miners had joined in the demonstration in behalf of Tom Mooney, whom they believed to be unjustly convicted of murder, and had remained away from work from one to five days, contrary to the advice of national and district officials. Although work was very slack at the time, these miners were fined several dollars apiece, much to their indignation. The depression in business following the Armistice, resulting in much unemployment, the rising cost of living, and the suffering due to the influenza epidemic had all combined to cause restlessness among the miners and make them feel that a new agreement, providing for higher wages and the abolition of the penalty clause, was imperative before another winter set in, yet the district officials were making no move to remedy the situation. Accordingly, on August 3, a mass meeting was held at Priesters Park in Belleville, with about 2,000 present, at which it was voted to strike in protest against the existing agreement. A radical resolution was adopted, declaring that the capitalist system had completely broken down and was "no longer able to supply the material and spiritual needs of the workers of the land"; the delegates to the national convention of the U. M. W. should therefore work to "pull the organization out of the hands of labor fakirs, so that the power to legislate be again in the keeping of the rank and file," and should see that a call was issued to the workers of all industries to an industrial Congress, there to demand that all the instruments of production be

handed over to them.[30] These demands showed the influence of a pamphlet called, *The Mines to the Miners,* which was circulated widely by the Socialistic Labor Party throughout the district. For this reason, President Farrington of District 12 declared that that party was at the bottom of the whole movement, which he interpreted as an attempt to disrupt the miners' union. On August 8 he issued a letter to all members of District 12, calling the leaders of the insurgents emissaries of the S. L. P., advocates of I. W. W.'ism, fakirs, fanatics, etc. "Men who seem to have forgotten their obligations as members of our union are lending aid to the elements of destruction, and every fundamental of the U. M. W. of A. is being flouted and outraged. Such conduct is striking at the very vitals of our nation. It is nothing short of treason," he declared. As a matter of fact, the S. L. P. representatives had advised against the strike and urged that the miners turn their attention to fundamental reforms within their own organization, so that the rank and file might really control it and through it make an effective demand for the overthrow of capitalism. When they saw that the strike was inevitable they helped with it for awhile, but the chief promoters of the insurgent movement were decidedly opposed to the S. L. P., according to President Thompson of Sub-district 4.[31] The causes of the movement were much more deep-seated than any radical propaganda.

Progress of the Strike

At a second meeting held on August 5, a Policy Committee was formed, with representatives from the mines

[30] A somewhat similar resolution was adopted at the convention of Sub-district 4, of District 12, in April, 1920.

[31] *Proceedings of the 5th Semi-annual Convention* of Sub-district 4, of District 12, U. M. W., April, 1920, p. 12, Report of President Thompson.

in the region, to conduct the strike and to induce all miners in the state to join. It declared that the Washington agreement had expired, and hence penalty fines were illegal, and demanded that a special district convention be called to negotiate a new wage scale. The District Executive Board refused to call the special convention, so the insurgents called one themselves, and drew up a statement of demands, including the socialization of the mines among other things. A resolution was also passed calling for the impeachment of President Farrington and other district officials, for neglect of duty, extravagance, etc. By this time the strike had become widespread, and according to the insurgent leaders, representatives of 141 locals and 55,000 members were present at the convention.[32] President Farrington claimed that only 20,000 out of 90,000 miners in the state were involved in the strike, but the Policy Committee at Springfield declared that 75,000 went out before the strike was over. Policy Committees were established in the different subdistricts, and their chairmen made up the state Policy Committee. The insurgents claimed that they were not setting up a rival organization, however, but were merely seeking redress of grievances. "Crusaders" from Belleville went through the district, enlisting recruits for the strike, but were turned back at the point of a gun by special deputies. Many "loyal" members of the union were appointed as deputies and given arms, and at the convention of Sub-district 4 in April, 1920, it was insinuated that many of these deputies were paid out of union funds in order to force the strikers back to work. The district officials had refused to itemize the account of $27,000 spent in fighting the insurgent strike, though the constitution required this, and many demands had

[32] *Proceedings* of the U. M. W. Convention, 1919, pp. 445-48.

been made for it.[33] One delegate remarked, "I think the Kaiser didn't have much on the way the rank and file are treated by our officers."[34] Much resentment was caused by the methods used by the district officials in putting down the movement. Certain delegates from Belleville were slugged when on their way to address the miners at Springfield, and a firm belief that Farrington was responsible for this caused the Springfield group to join the insurgents at once. The charge of complicity in this affair was not denied by Farrington.[35]

Aftermath

Although the "outlaw" convention held on August 19 voted to call off the strike, on the ground that the national officers had decided to negotiate for a new agreement, large numbers of the Illinois miners remained out for some time longer. The operators agreed to refund the Mooney strike fines and not collect fines for this strike if the men returned to work by August 30, upon the promise of Farrington that the charters of all locals whose members refused to return by that time should be revoked. This apparent cooperation between operators and union officials made many of the insurgents angry, and twenty-four locals remained on strike long enough to suffer the threatened penalty. The Peoria miners replied to the threat of the loss of their charter by a telegram addressed to "His Royal Highness, Lord Farrington," which said in part: "You all can go to Hell and take the charter with you, for may we not advise you to get passports to Holland and join your friend Bill Hohenzollern, for the miners will not stand for the

[33] *Proceedings* of the Sub-district No. 4, District No. 12, Convention, April, 1920, p. 70.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 59.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

organization being Kaiserized any longer." A mass meeting of Peoria locals had previously passed a resolution (which was later introduced at the national convention) complaining of the "treacherous anti-working class conduct of the officials of District 12—Farrington and others," who had been corrupted by the operators, and declared for a revision of the constitution to make it conform to the spirit of true industrial unionism.[36]

The strike died out gradually and by early September was practically over. Thereupon began a campaign of retribution. Although new locals were promptly organized in place of those which had lost their charters, the ringleaders of the strike were refused readmission or expelled, and hence could get no work in Illinois mines, and without transfer cards could with difficulty work elsewhere. The operators discriminated against the insurgents in many cases also, and as it was necessary to have a job before rejoining the union, kept many out of the organization in that way. Many protests against "unfair discrimination" were voiced at the district and sub-district convention of 1920. At the national convention in September, 1919, delegates from the twenty-four expelled locals presented themselves, and a long debate occurred over the question of seating them, those in favor speaking of the fine spirit shown by the insurgents and the inactivity of the district officials in remedying intolerable conditions, and those opposed maintaining that the whole movement was merely an attempt on the part of the U. M. W. to wreck the union. It was finally voted that they could not be seated.[37]

[36] *Proceedings* of the U. M. W. Convention, 1919, p. 635-36.

[37] For a full discussion of the question, see pp. 438-560 of the *Proceedings* of the U. M. W. Convention of 1919.

Before turning away from the Illinois situation it is interesting to note that Farrington upheld the Illinois strikers of 1920 in their protest against the award of the Bituminous Commission, though their strike was considered by the national officials to be a flagrant violation of agreement.

Summary of Main Characteristics

In bringing this chapter to a close, we may sum up the main characteristics of the U. M. W. as follows: The organization is one of the largest and most successful in the country, but nevertheless it is still forced to fight bitter conflicts for the right to exist in certain regions. In general its officials maintain loyalty to contracts scrupulously, but occasionally groups within the union get beyond their control, due to the pressure of circumstances which seem intolerable to the rank and file. On the other hand, the union officials in some cases are less devoted to the interests of their members than perhaps they should be, and are content to receive large salaries and court the favor of operators while the rank and file are suffering from abuses which should be remedied. Although the organization considers itself democratic, there is a decided feeling on the part of some of its members that the officials, through their power of appointing organizers and others on the pay-roll and thus building up a machine which is loyal to it under all circumstances, and through their power to settle various matters without consulting the membership, dominate the organization to such an extent that there is need of a reconstruction of the constitution which will put greater power in the hands of the rank and file. The traditional policy of the union is conservative, but there is a radical minority which is increasing in influence, and has recently caused the organization to take what seems to many a radical stand in regard to the future of the industry.

To what extent are the characteristics of the U. M. W. due to the fact that it is an industrial union? As has been pointed out, the industrial form of organization was adopted, not because of any special theories as to the solidarity of all workers or the superiority of indus-

trial to craft unionism, but rather because of the practical advantage of including all who worked in and around the mines, so that small groups might not tie up the industry and throw the mass of the workers out of employment. The fact that the mines were for the most part in isolated regions where the few skilled craftsmen could not readily unite with their fellow craftsmen of other industries, combined with the fact that the overwhelming majority of the mine workers were eligible to membership in no other union, made the industrial form of organization inevitable. Although adopted for practical rather than theoretical reasons, the industrial structure has nevertheless affected the policies of the union in various ways. The automatic collection of union dues by means of the check-off system was a natural outgrowth of the attempt to include every worker in the industry. The policy of making contracts with employers is no more characteristic of industrial unionism than of craft unionism, if as much so, yet it is unquestionably true that the U. M. W. would have been much less successful in its contracts if it had not tried to unite all types of workers connected with the mines. The domination of the organization by its officials, in so far as it exists, is quite out of keeping with the spirit of industrial unionism, but the rising tide of protest against it and the growing demand for greater democracy in the conduct of union affairs are a natural result of the emphasis on the value of every individual worker, however humble, and on the necessity of united action on the part of the whole social group, which the philosophy of the industrial union involves. Finally, the demand for such a reconstruction of the industry as will result in production for the common good rather than for private profit, is in harmony with the fundamental hopes and aims of industrial unionism.

CHAPTER IV

INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM AMONG THE METAL MINERS

History of Metal Miners' Union

The idea of joining the various unions of metal miners into one organization was born in the brain of George Pettibone when he was in jail after the Coeur d'Alene strike in Idaho in 1892, and as a result the Western Federation of Miners came into being the following year. At first it was practically a craft organization, including only underground workers, but before long the folly of this restriction was realized and the jurisdiction extended to include engineers, pumpmen, firemen, machinists, and others working in and around the mines, and also those engaged in reducing the ore in mills and smelters. The early policy of the organization was to form separate locals of different crafts, to some extent. Firemen, pumpmen, machinists, and engineers, for instance, were obliged to join the Engineers' Union of the Western Federation of Miners. In 1910, however, it was voted to issue no more charters that would segregate men according to crafts, as it was felt that uniting all workers in and around a mine in one local would result in greater solidarity.[1] In 1916 the name of the Federation was changed to the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, as neither the word "Western" nor the word "Miners" was inclusive enough to describe the union accurately. By this time it had extended its jurisdiction over the United States and Canada and had

[1] *Miners' Magazine*, August 11, 1910, p. 9.

many members in the East and South. The organization has had a checkered career so far as affiliation goes. For the first three years it was independent; then it was connected with the American Federation of Labor for two years; in 1898 it withdrew and helped form the Western Labor Union; from 1905 to 1908 it was a part of the Industrial Workers of the World; from 1908 to 1911 it was again independent; and since 1911 it has once more been affiliated with the A. F. of L. This fluctuation gives some indication of the conflicting currents within the organization.

Bitter Struggles—Class Consciousness

The Western Federation of Miners for the first fifteen years of its history was as militantly radical and class conscious as the coal miners' union was conservative. To be sure, the preamble which was adopted in 1893 and remained substantially the same till 1907, made no mention of the class struggle, and definitely stated that the union aimed "to use all honorable means to maintain friendly relations between ourselves and our employers, and endeavor by arbitration and conciliation to settle any difficulties which may arise between us, and thus make strikes unnecessary." Fair compensation commensurate with the dangers of their employment, safety devices, just labor laws, and similar improvements, rather than any radical overturning of the industrial system, were the objects sought. Nevertheless, force of circumstances and bitter experiences in conflicts with employers made the class struggle seem an undeniable fact, and strengthened the conviction that there was no identity of interest between capital and labor. The details of the dramatic and terrible conflicts that were fought out in the mining camps of the

West during that first decade—in the Coeur d'Alenes, Leadville, Salt Lake, Telluride, Idaho Springs, and Cripple Creek—cannot be given here, but they are characterized by much disorder and lawlessness on both sides. Most stirring of these was the struggle in the Cripple Creek district of Colorado from 1903 to 1904, in which the operators endeavored to stamp out unionism so effectively that it would never again rear its head in the region. The *Miners' Magazine* calls the war that was there waged upon the W. F. M. "the most lawless and brutal that was ever carried on against any labor organization in the history of this country."[2] According to a statement made by the Executive Board of the union at the time, more than 400 miners were deported forcibly from the state; homes of union men were destroyed and their wives assaulted; strike breakers were armed and incited to violence by the operators; multitudes of innocent people were herded into bull pens and kept there for long periods; union halls were sacked, safes broken, and records taken; cooperative stores established by the union were entered by mobs without hindrance from the authorities, their entire contents destroyed, and their managers and clerks marched to the bull pen, etc. On the other hand, the strikers were charged with being a band of law-breakers and rioters who were carrying on violent insurrection. Without attempting to sift out the truth of the various charges made, one can clearly see that experiences such as those described could not fail to intensify class bitterness and develop a militant type of radicalism within the W. F. M.[3]

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[2] *Miners' Magazine,* June 23, 1904.

[3] It is interesting to note that eight years after this bitter struggle the W. F. M. held a large convention in the very spot where it had been said of them, "They can never come back," and were welcomed by the mayor.

Political Attitude

The belief that both city and state governments were in connivance with the mine owners in breaking strikes and in preventing the passage of labor laws, or disregarding them after they were passed, convinced the miners of the need of political action by the workers. Accordingly at their tenth convention in 1902 they declared in favor of such action and endorsed the principles of the Socialist Party. For several years after this the official journal of the union was full of direct Socialist propaganda. In 1907 a new preamble was adopted which stated that the exploitation of the workers would continue "till the producer is recognized as the sole master of his product." "The working class and it alone can and must achieve its own emancipation," and " an industrial union and the concerted action of all wage-earners is the only method of obtaining this end," the preamble declared. At the tenth convention it was also proposed that the Federation invest some of its money in mines to be operated by its members for the benefit of the workers, and the following year President Moyer urged an assessment for this purpose. This plan for experimenting with workers' control of industry had to be given up because of the strike then confronting the union, but the idea had its influence.

Western Labor Union

Dissatisfaction with the lack of solidarity displayed in the A. F. of L., which according to Moyer had given the miners "nothing but sympathy" in their disastrous Leadville strike,[4] and a desire for a closer union with workers in other industries, led the W. F. M. to withdraw from the A. F. of L. in 1898 and call a convention which

[4] *Proceedings of the 21st Annual Convention* of the United Mine Workers of America, 1910, p. 216.

resulted in the formation of the Western Labor Union. This new industrial organization aimed to include all kinds and degrees of labor in the West, and succeeded in enrolling many cooks, waiters, teamsters, and lumbermen, but the W. F. M. was always its strongest element.[5] In 1902 it changed its name to the American Labor Union, and moved its headquarters from Butte to Chicago, evidently hoping to enlarge its scope. Instead of that, the organization began to decline and was on the verge of dissolution when it merged with the I. W. W. in 1905.

Relations with I. W. W.

When the movement for forming a new organization to unite the whole working class was launched, the W. F. M. entered it with enthusiasm and became one of its strongest supporters. At the thirteenth convention, President Moyer said that acceptance of the manifesto which laid down the principles on which the I. W. W. was to be formed, would not involve changing the principles or policy of the W. F. M. in the least. Delegates were sent to the conference for organizing the new movement with power to install the W. F. M. as an integral part of it. When the organization known as the I. W. W. was launched in June, 1905, the metal miners formed the largest group in it and furnished the greater part of its funds. Disappointed that the brewery workmen and many others did not join in the new movement, the W. F. M. had to "again stand the brunt of the battle in the attempt to plant the seed of industrial unionism," as Moyer later expressed it.[6] Quarrels between rival factions at the second convention of the I. W. W. caused a split in that

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[5] Brissenden, *The I. W. W., a Study of American Syndicalism* (New York, 1919), p. 44.

[6] *Miners' Magazine*, July 23, 1908, Moyer's Report to the Convention.

organization and many delegates of the W. F. M. withdrew with Sherman, the deposed president. The W. F. M. ceased paying dues to the organization, and at its second convention in 1907 decided after a heated discussion not to recognize either faction but to aid in the formation of a new I. W. W. on a solid foundation. A call was issued to all labor bodies interested in industrial unionism, including the United Brewery Workmen, the United Mine Workers, and both groups of the I. W. W., to come to a conference for the consideration of the subject; but only one group, the followers of Sherman, accepted the invitation.[7] The main body of the I. W. W., known as the Trautmann faction, sent an insulting reply, which caused the W. F. M. at its next convention in 1908 to decide on an absolute divorce from the movement. An acrimonious discussion took place in which the minority upheld the Trautmann group, but a referendum vote of the entire membership sustained those who wished to sever relations. Some locals refused to obey the decision, however, and long-continued dissension within the Federation resulted from it. William Haywood who had been an official of the W. F. M. for several years was ousted for insisting on remaining with the I. W. W.

Turn toward Conservatism

At the 1908 convention President Moyer reviewed the history of the various attempts to form an all-inclusive industrial organization, and stated: "I believe that it is a well-established fact that industrial unionism is by no means popular, and I feel safe in saying that it is not wanted by the working class of America." Every time it had been rejected by an overwhelming majority, he declared. He then went on to say:

[7] *Ibid.*

> I for one am more fully convinced than ever that only through an industrial form of labor and united political action can the working class expect to permanently settle the wage question, but the situation which now confronts us is as to whether or not in the face of many years of experience and the numerous failures which I have recited we shall continue along the same lines, or shall we profiting by said experience outline a more feasible plan of bringing about that for which we strive.[8]

The W. F. M. he declared was not "called upon to continue that which for the time being has proved impossible." Though continuing to carry on a campaign of education in favor of political action to end the capitalist system, it should turn its chief attention to the primary object of the organization which is to "better the condition of those employed in the mining industry under the present system." The union "should at all times assume a position of absolute fairness. . . . While firm in our claims, we should ever be ready to listen to the other side and exert every effort to prevent a conflict."

Although the W. F. M. still held to a belief in the uselessness of voting for any but the Socialist Party, this speech of Moyer's marked a turning point in the organization toward greater conservatism. One factor in this change may have been the belief of many of its members that the arrest of Moyer, Haywood, and Pettibone on the charge of being implicated in the murder of Governor Steunenberg of Idaho was largely due to their connection with such a revolutionary body as the I. W. W. The three men were seized in Denver in February, 1906, rushed into the state of Idaho before they knew what charge was made against them, and imprisoned there for fifteen months before trial. This famous case, which ended finally in the acquittal of all three men, so stirred

[8] *Miners' Magazine*, July 23, 1908, Moyer's Report.

the labor world that all sections of it rallied to their defense. A more important factor in the changed attitude, however, was the growing realization that the methods which the metal miners had adopted had not enabled them to organize any large proportion of the workers under their jurisdiction, or attain a degree of success which compared with that of the United Mine Workers, their sister organization.

Early Friction with United Mine Workers

For some time the W. F. M. had desired closer relations with the United Mine Workers. To be sure, there had not always been harmony between the two bodies, and many bitter articles had appeared in the official journal of the metal miners attacking John Mitchell, president of the United Mine Workers, for his conservative policies. Mitchell, on the other hand, charged the W. F. M. with trying to encroach on the jurisdiction of the coal miners, and with interfering with them by urging them to break their contracts, and in some cases by actually taking their places in time of strike. Because of his opposition, the United Mine Workers in 1906 voted down a resolution providing for interchangeable union cards with the W. F. M. The metal miners had previously voted to accept workers who wished to transfer from the coal miners' union without initiation fees, and continued to do so. They also continued to organize other coal miners, to some extent, but their desire for affiliation with the United Mine Workers before long led them to seek an agreement preventing further friction from this cause.

Reaffiliation with A. F. of L.

It was largely this desire that caused the W. F. M. to decide by an overwhelming vote to apply for member-

ship in the A. F. of L. early in 1909. It did so, not because it agreed with the policy of the A. F. of L., or with what it called its "old fogy ideas," but because it wanted to unite with the great mass of organized workers. In so doing it was merely seeking a new form of expression for the desire for solidarity which had once manifested itself in the union's early enthusiasm for the I. W. W. As was stated at their twentieth convention, the miners felt they could play their part best by aiding the constructive forces within the Federation, and trying to instill new life into it, rather than by criticizing it from outside. The A. F. of L. was in no hurry to forget the various sneers which the W. F. M. had cast at it in the past, however, and some of its constituent unions objected to the desired charter for fear of encroachment on their own jurisdiction, so the returning prodigal was not readmitted till 1911. The principal opponent of the admission of the organization was the International Association of Machinists, which had a few locals in mining camps and was unwilling to surrender them. The United Mine Workers stood valiantly by the metal miners in this controversy, and at its convention of 1911 passed a resolution protesting against the delay in granting the charter. Believing that a refusal to admit the W. F. M. would be an attack on the principle of industrial unionism on which their own organization was based, the coal miners even went so far as to threaten withdrawal from the A. F. of L. if the charter was not granted.[9] A telegram from the A. F. of L. announced that the decision to grant the request of the W. F. M. was made just before word of the action of the United Mine Workers was received.

The charter that was finally granted gave jurisdiction

[9] *Proceedings of the 22nd Annual Convention* of the U. M. W. of A., 1911, p. 216.

over all who worked in and around the mines, mills, and smelters, with the exception of members of machinists' locals already in existence in mining camps. In spite of the claims of the W. F. M., many of the workers about the metal mines had previously belonged to different unions, so the charter really marked an advance in the direction of practical industrial unionism. Nevertheless a minority in the organization strenuously opposed the acceptance of the charter, although President Moyer assured them that it meant no surrender of their principles of industrial and political action. The decision of the A. F. of L. has not wholly freed the miners' federation from jurisdictional disputes, as a matter of fact, for different organizations in the metal trades have continued to encroach upon it to some extent. The matter has been brought before the A. F. of L. several times and the rights of the W. F. M. have been upheld, but there has been considerable friction over the issue in some localities.

Present Relations with United Mine Workers

Although affiliation with the A. F. of L. has resulted in an alliance between the metal miners and the coal miners through the Mining Department, the amalgamation of the two bodies so long desired by the W. F. M. has not yet taken place. Committees have frequently been appointed by the two unions to consider the question of consolidation, but their decision has always been that it would be impractical at the present time. In 1916 the committee of the United Mine Workers reported that their union needed to throw all its energies into organizing the non-union men in the coal mines and could not undertake responsibility for the large numbers of unorganized metal miners. The W. F. M. had less than 17,000 out of the 200,000 eligible for its membership, they said, and hence

could only be a source of weakness to the stronger organization.[10] Each union had its own peculiar problems, and though they could cooperate harmoniously, by interchange of cards and other means as they had in the past, an actual amalgamation was not desirable for the time being. From a competitive standpoint the metal miners were less closely related to the coal miners than were men engaged in the production of oil and gas; and in times of struggle they were less necessary to them than those employed in transportation; hence no great advantage would accrue from uniting the two bodies. Nevertheless the United Mine Workers would gladly give what assistance they could to their sister organization. This decision, in which the W. F. M. agreed, was affirmed in 1918. One reason for the acquiescence of the metal miners was their realization that amalgamation would increase their financial burdens, as it would involve paying a per capita tax to the joint organization as well as meeting their own expenses as a district branch of it.

Attitude toward Contracts

The next important step taken by the W. F. M. was their decision in 1912 to give up their old opposition to contracts and follow the example of the United Mine Workers whose progress they now recognized as largely due to their joint agreement with employers. The opposition to such agreements, which had been characteristic of the Western Federation for many years, was due to the belief that they divided the workers, making one group remain at work while war was being waged upon another group which needed their assistance. Contracts expiring at different times made cooperation impossible and checked

[10] The official figures for membership in 1916 are 19,000.

all progress, the metal miners had frequently declared. Furthermore they gave a false sense of security, and prevented the continual interest in the organization which was necessary for success. The reversal of this attitude and the endorsement of time agreements was perhaps the most significant event in the history of the organization. Since the change in policy, there has been an increasing number of such agreements with employers. In some cases the check-off system of the coal miners has also been adopted, in spite of the feeling of certain members that this system gave employers too great a hold on the union.

Growing Conservatism

In 1916, President Moyer attributed the lack of progress in the organization to the failure to adopt trade agreements and the check-off system earlier, so that the mine owners might recognize the union as a responsible institution; second, to the mistake of not remaining affiliated with the A. F. of L. in the first place instead of breaking away and launching dual movements; and finally, to the fact that the organization had committed itself to certain political principles not held by the majority in the industry. Because of this political stand, not only had employers refused to deal with the organization, but many workers had held aloof from it. The preamble, which was the declaration of a political party, he said, should be rewritten to be in keeping with an industrial organization. He then went on to say:

> Instead of devoting a greater part of its time and energy as it has in the past in attempting to teach our fellow trades unionists the only correct form of economic and political organization, [the union] must become a business institution, devoting its efforts to the objects for which it was organized, namely to unite the various persons working around the mines . . . into one central body,

to increase their wages and improve their conditions of employment.[11]

An illuminating comparison may be made between this statement and the one made by Moyer at the convention of 1905 in regard to the declaration in favor of the Socialist Party three years before:

> I am free to say today that the action of that convention three years ago has done more for the wage-earning class of the country than all other resolutions passed since you became an organization.[12]

The gradual change from radicalism to conservatism on the part of this labor leader and the organization he represents furnishes a most interesting study. In 1916, following the recommendation of its president, the W. F. M. adopted a new preamble in which all mention of the class struggle and of independent political action for the emancipation of the workers was omitted.

Radical Minority

This progress toward conservatism has not been made without opposition, however. Ever since the Western Federation withdrew from the I. W. W., efforts have been made to disrupt the organization, or capture it for the radicals. Attempts were made to put into all locals men who were pledged to "true industrial unionism," who were to adapt themselves to the opinions of their respective locals till they had won the confidence of their fellow-members and been elected to the annual convention. Their next step was to be the overthrow of Moyer and reaffiliation with the I. W. W. The movement to join the A. F.

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[11] *Proceedings of the 22nd Consecutive and 2nd Biennial Convention* of the W. F. M., 1916, p. 40.

[12] *Miners' Magazine*, May 25, 1905, p. 5.

of L. was bitterly opposed by this group, of course. After the constitution was amended to provide for nomination and election of officers by the rank and file, the efforts to unseat Moyer were redoubled. The "conspirators" circulated slanders against him and other officials, charging them with responsibility for the failure of the organization to grow and with various specific offenses. An accusation of the theft of $14,000 from the union treasury was even brought against Moyer.[13] The twentieth convention completely exonerated him, and expelled the leader of the "conspiracy," but this action did not check the unrest.

Internal Struggle at Butte

Butte, Montana, had long been a center of rebellion, and in 1914 the trouble there came to a climax. Friction between local officers and the more radical members resulted in a turbulent attack upon the Miners' Hall, and in the decision of a large number to break away from the Federation and form an independent union. Moyer hastened to the spot at once and presented a plan for settling the difficulties, but while he was addressing the union members, a mob of insurgents surrounded the Miners' Hall and shots were fired. It is uncertain who fired the first one; but the rioting became so serious that those inside had to climb down the fire-escape in order to get away. Then without warning the hall was blown up by dynamite. The officials of the W. F. M. believed that the I. W. W. were responsible for this outrage, as well as for previous manifestations of hoodlumism, but the Socialist mayor of Butte absolutely denied that they had any connection with it. The leaders of the new organiza-

[13] *Miners' Magazine,* July 18, 1912, Moyer's Speech to the Convention.

tion of miners also denied responsibility for the dynamiting, and said it was the act of an outraged crowd after shots had been fired from the hall.[14] For some reason, the hatred felt for local officials was transferred to Moyer, and men followed him to Helena threatening to kill him. Moyer admitted that there was evidence of some abuses in the Butte local, but as no complaint of such abuses had been made to him he could hardly be held responsible for them. He considered the whole affair to be part of the campaign for destroying the organization which had been going on for years. The leaders of the insurgent group, on the other hand, stated that the local at Butte was completely dominated by one of the big copper companies, and that all efforts to get rid of the corrupt gang at the head of it had failed. Furthermore, the rank and file objected to the assessments levied by the national organization and to the "luxury" of the general officers, and wished to be independent.[15] The new union, which adopted a constitution very similar to that of the I. W. W., at once began an aggressive attempt to force all other miners in the district to leave the old organization. Although no great success was attained by this new body, the Butte local of the W. F. M.—or the International Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers, as it must be called after 1916—has never recovered its former power. Not only has it been fought by the union which seceded from it in 1914, but also by Branch 800 of the I. W. W., by another independent union known as the Metal Mine Workers which is in close harmony with the I. W. W., and by a branch of the Canadian One Big Union. As a result of the conflict between these various groups, the great mass of the miners in that region are entirely unorganized.

[14] *Miners' Magazine,* July 9, 1914.
[15] *Ibid.,* July 23, 1914, Moyer's Speech to the Convention.

Dissensions Elsewhere

The hostility between the I. W. W. and the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, and the dissensions within the organization which have to considerable extent been due to I. W. W. influence, have manifested themselves in various other places, and have not diminished as time has passed. In the mining camps of Arizona, Nevada, and Montana the bitterness has been especially acute. In Bisbee, Arizona, the officials of the Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers' local and those of the local branch of the I. W. W. united in organizing a mass meeting of miners in 1917, at which it was voted not to have anything to do with the check-off and contract systems. The charter of the A. F. of L. local was at once revoked because of such "treacherous dealing with the I. W. W.," and a new one formed.[16] This new local proved recalcitrant, also, joining with other groups in attacking the International officers, and declaring that "Moyerism" with its long record of blunders and failures must be abolished before the organization could grow. A movement in Arizona to organize a district union of the Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers, demanding sole power over the locals of the district and a larger percentage of the per capita tax than the international constitution allowed, was led by an active worker in the I. W. W. In his report to the 1918 convention, President Moyer charged that this leader, who held membership in both organizations, was deliberately trying to create dissensions in the A. F. of L. union in order to destroy its locals and make way for the I. W. W. Accordingly a resolution was passed at this convention calling the I. W. W. "the worst

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[16] *Proceedings of the 23rd Consecutive and 3rd Biennial Convention* of the Int. Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers, 1918, p. 40, Moyer's Report.

enemy of legitimate labor unions," whose "principal mission seems to be the destruction of bona fide labor unions," and declaring that any member knowingly advocating or endorsing I. W. W. tactics should be expelled.[17] Considering the early history of the miners' organization, its present hatred for all but "legitimate" labor groups is particularly interesting—though perhaps not surprising, since family quarrels are reputed to be more bitter than any others.

Degree of Democracy

It is difficult to determine to what extent there has been justification for the great opposition to President Moyer in his own organization. Eugene Debs, in a statement published in the *Miners' Magazine* of August 6, 1914, upholds him valiantly, saying that no man in the labor movement has suffered more for the cause of labor than he has. If the rank and file were not loyal to him they could easily turn him out, as no more democratic organization than the W. F. M. exists, Debs declares. It is quite true that the machinery of the union makes impossible the continuance in office of anyone who did not have the support of the majority of the membership. According to the present constitution, each local may nominate one candidate for each office, and the names of all who are nominated by at least five locals are placed upon the ballot which is submitted to the entire membership for the final vote. Before 1912 officers were nominated and elected at the convention, but to meet the cry against the administration this provision was changed, and recall of officers was also made possible. The term of office is two years. There have been various attempts to forbid an

[17] *Proceedings* of the Convention of the Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers, 1918, p. 105.

officer's serving more than two consecutive terms, but Moyer has vigorously opposed any such change, warning the union that this would result in inefficiency. He has thus succeeded in remaining in office ever since first elected in 1902. In the 1920 election, he received 5,818 votes out of a total of 8,170 cast for president.[18]

All proposed legislation must be submitted to a referendum vote of the membership. Amendments to the constitution may either be passed by the convention before submission to the referendum, or else may be initiated by ten locals representing at least 5 per cent of the entire membership. In emergencies a special referendum may be held either on the demand of ten locals, or on the initiative of the Executive Board. These provisions are all calculated to put the control of union affairs in the hands of the rank and file rather than in those of the officials, however eager they may be to perpetuate themselves in office. In the matter of strikes the control is somewhat more centralized. No strikes may be called without the authority of the Executive Board of the International Union, after two-thirds of the local union voting upon it have expressed themselves in favor of such action. If the local belongs to a district union, the consent of the District Executive Board is necessary also. Strikes are to be called only as a very last resort. If in order to make the strike of one local successful it is necessary to call out other locals, however, the Executive Board of the International has power to do so. This last power, which was given the Board in 1903, has caused some objection, but Moyer defends it on the ground that the interests of the workers are one and hence they should be willing to lay aside their individual selfishness and stand by each other in time of stress. The assessments levied by the

[18] *Miners' Magazine*, August, 1920.

International have also been criticized by the insurgents. The constitution limits the amount which may be levied pending a referendum vote to $2 a month for two months; but this is enough to cause irritation in some cases, apparently. The per capita tax to the International is 50 cents a month.

Present Status

The dissensions within the organization have greatly weakened it in every way. In 1911 when it joined the A. F. of L. its membership was 50,200, the largest it had ever had.[19] In 1914 it had 36,900 members, but by 1917 had dropped to only 17,219, a smaller number than it had had since 1900.[20] The following year President Hayes of the United Mine Workers stated at his convention that the Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers was "practically out of business," due to its early policy of disregarding contracts and its continual strikes. The great decline did not take place till after this policy had been given up and the union had joined the A. F. of L., however—so radicals are inclined to give a quite different reason for it. The real cause was undoubtedly the internal dissensions over the question, combined with the general state of the industry. The long and disastrous strike in the copper mines of Michigan, and the depressed state of the industry at the end of 1914, due to war conditions, helped to cause the great drop in membership beginning at that time; but the conflict of ideas has been a far more important factor in it. By 1918 the membership had increased to 19,199, and the number of locals was given as 106.[21] Two years later,

[19] *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 30, Appendix, p. 838.

[20] *Report of the Secretary Treasurer to the 23rd Consecutive and 3rd Biennial Convention*, 1918, p. 50.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 50.

representation at the convention of the A. F. of L. was based on a report of 21,100 members. President Moyer stated in September, 1920, that more than 15,000 new members had been gained in the campaign for organizing workers in the steel industry, though many of these members were lost after the failure of the steel strike. Little progress had been made in the West in rebuilding the locals which had been destroyed by the "insidious activities of the so-called unions," or in increasing the membership in partially organized camps, Moyer reported, but in the eastern and southern parts of the country there had been decided growth. In the previous two years, 125 new charters had been issued and the "most wonderful achievements . . . in the history of the organization" had been made, in spite of almost insurmountable difficulties, he declared.[22] The recuperation of the union did not continue long, however, for by 1921 the membership as reported to the A. F. of L. convention had dropped to only 16,200. This great decline is attributed by the president of the Mining Department to the fact that the metal industry has been experiencing the greatest slump in its history, so that a tremendous strain has been put upon the union. Whatever reason may be given for it, the present outlook for the organization is far from encouraging.

Conclusion

In conclusion we may say that the Western Federation of Miners, or the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, has in the past had high hopes of uniting the whole working class for a victorious struggle with capital which would result in a complete reorganization of our industrial system. Many disappointments have

[22] *Miners' Magazine*, Sept., 1920, Moyer's Report to the Convention.

convinced its leaders, however, that mere theorizing about the ultimate triumph of the workers without practical methods of organizing those workers and redressing their immediate grievances will accomplish little toward building up a strong organization. Due largely to the opposition of a militant minority, the adoption of tactics like those of the United Mine Workers has done nothing to improve the fortunes of the union, however, and while dissension between the two factions has gone on, the membership has rapidly decreased and the great mass of the metal workers has remained unorganized. A willingness to compromise and work out some plan for cooperation must be developed if there is to be any real sense of solidarity within the industry, or any success on the part of the union.

PART II

REVOLUTIONARY INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM INCLUDING WORKERS OF ALL INDUSTRIES

CHAPTER V

THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD

Characteristics of I. W. W. Type of Unionism

Hitherto we have been considering the unionism which limits itself to a single industry, but we must now turn our attention to that which reaches out to the whole working class, seeking to include all under the banner of one great union which shall eventually overthrow capitalism and bring in a new and better day. Of this type of industrial unionism we have three examples in America at the present time; the Industrial Workers of the World, the Workers' International Industrial Union, formerly known as the Detroit branch of the I. W. W., and the One Big Union. All of these are revolutionary in aim and class conscious in spirit. The first two will be considered in this chapter.

Origin

So much has already been written about the I. W. W. that no attempt will be made here to give its history in detail, but attention will be centered rather upon the present policies of the organization and its general philosophy. A few of the outstanding facts in its development must be noted, however. Before the formation of the I. W. W. in Chicago in June, 1905, there had been various attempts to form all-inclusive organizations of workers, which should seek definitely to bring about a new social order. One of these of course was the Knights of Labor, which was described in the first chapter. Another was the Western Labor Union, later known as the American Labor

Union, which was formed in 1898 under the leadership of the Western Federation of Miners. This industrial organization officially endorsed Socialism but admitted workmen of various political views. Another was the Socialist Trades and Labor Alliance which was formed in 1895 under the leadership of Daniel DeLeon and endorsed by the Socialist Labor Party the following year. It was patterned after the Knights of Labor, having both craft locals and mixed locals, but was always more of an organ for revolutionary propaganda than an industrial union, as all of its members belonged to the Socialist Labor Party. Although starting with a membership of about 15,000,[1] mostly in and around New York, and spreading rapidly to other centers, it soon declined in numbers and included only about 1,400 when it merged with the I. W. W. in 1905. There were also various individuals among the United Brewery Workers and the United Mine Workers and other organizations who felt the need of widening the scope of industrial unionism and uniting all workers in one powerful organization. In order to bring together all interested in forming such an organization, a group of radical labor leaders, after a preliminary conference, met in January, 1905, and issued a manifesto calling for a convention to be held the following June to launch a new body based on the principles of all-inclusive revolutionary industrial unionism. At this convention, which was attended by delegates from 43 different organizations, including 16 belonging to the A. F. of L., and about 40 different occupations,[2] the organization known as the Industrial Workers of the World was inaugurated, with the Western Federation of Miners, the American

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[1] *Daniel DeLeon, A Symposium,* published by the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Labor Party, 1919, p. 30.

[2] Brissenden, *The I. W. W.,* pp. 70-71.

Labor Union, the Socialist Trades and Labor Alliance, the United Metal Workers, the United Brotherhood of Railway Employees, and a few smaller bodies included as integral parts of it. The balance of power was held by the W. F. M., which had 27,000 members, all the other bodies being relatively weak and some of them existing chiefly on paper.

Conflicting Elements

There were many conflicting elements in the organization, which was held together, as has been well said, only by the "binding force of common antipathies." [8] All were opposed to capitalism and to craft unionism, but they were divided into three main groups in regard to tactics: (1) members of the Socialist Labor Party who placed chief emphasis on political action; (2) members of the Socialist Party, who were less doctrinaire than those of the Socialist Labor Party and wished to subordinate political action to economic organization; (3) anarchists who wished direct action wholly to take the place of political action.

Contrary to expectation the influence of the Socialist Trades and Labor Alliance was much stronger than its numerical power, and hence the new organization declared in favor of political action at its first convention. Friction between the different elements made the progress of the organization difficult and resulted in two separate splits during the next few years. The first came at the convention of 1906 when the so-called "reactionaries" withdrew, after the "revolutionists" had captured the convention, deposed President Sherman on the grounds of extravagance and autocracy, and abolished the office of president. As was stated in the previous chapter, this

[8] *Ibid*, p. 82.

dissension resulted in the permanent withdrawal of the W. F. M., the most prosperous and powerful body in the organization. For a time the "reactionary" wing, made up largely of members of the Socialist Party, continued to hold the general headquarters, forcing the other group to open new offices, but it soon gave up the struggle, leaving the "proletarian rabble" in control of the I. W. W. This was distinctly a victory of the poorer and less skilled workers over the more strongly organized and higher skilled. Outside of the W. F. M. the paid-up membership for the first year was only about 14,000, according to Vincent St. John, for many years an official of the organization—though the published reports of the second convention claim 60,000 members.[4] The enthusiasm roused by the founding of the I. W. W. soon subsided and for the next two or three years the membership steadily decreased, till in 1909 it was only about 3,700.[5]

Split between Political and Direct Actionist Groups

The second split in the organization came at the fourth convention in 1908, when a clash took place between the Socialist Labor Party and the Direct Actionist or Anarcho-Syndicalist group. For the first time the west was strongly represented. An "Overalls Brigade" had beat its way from the Pacific Coast, holding street meetings on the way, and succeeded in getting control of the organization, barring out DeLeon and many of his followers. The concrete experiences of the unskilled workers in western states had made them feel that political action was futile, and as a consequence one of the first acts of the convention, after the westerners had gained control, was to strike out of the preamble all reference to political

[4] Brissenden, *op. cit.*, p. 108.
[5] *Ibid.*, Table D, Appendix 4.

activity, and emphasize the necessity for industrial organization in order to abolish the wage system and put the machinery of production in the hands of the workers. The Socialist Labor Party members, "revolutionary theorists" as they were called by their opponents, then withdrew with DeLeon and hold a convention of their own in Paterson, N. J., with delegates from five eastern cities. Claiming to be the true I. W. W., they expelled the "anarchist" usurpers and reaffirmed the original preamble of the organization. They soon established headquarters in Detroit and have remained there ever since, though in 1915 they decided to give up the name I. W. W. and adopt that of Workers' International Industrial Union, leaving the original title to the Chicago faction. The differences between these two organizations will be given in somewhat greater detail later, but for the present we will concentrate attention on the I. W. W. group which has continued to keep its headquarters in Chicago and has always been much larger than that at Detroit.

Philosophy

The preamble which was adopted at the Chicago convention in 1908 and has been reaffirmed ever since reads as follows:

> The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life
>
> Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the earth and the machinery of production, and abolish the wage system.
>
> We find that the centering of management of the industries into fewer and fewer hands makes the trade unions unable to

cope with the ever growing power of the employing class. The trade unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping defeat one another in wage wars. Moreover, the trade unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

These conditions can be changed and the interest of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry, or in all industries if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

Instead of the conservative motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work," we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, "Abolition of the wage system."

It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism. The army of production must be organized, not only for the every-day struggle with capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.

The class struggle in its most uncompromising form is here set forth. All attempts to make the workers believe that they and their employers have anything in common, or that the wage system can ever result in justice, it declares to be pernicious. The workers must organize not merely to overthrow this system but to build the structure of a new society. The philosophy expressed in this preamble shows the influence of Karl Marx in its emphasis on the class struggle and the inevitable overthrow of capitalism, but it puts its hope not in politics but in "direct action," or, in other words, economic pressure. Practical experience had convinced the unskilled migratory workers from the west of the futility of political action, partly because most of them did not remain in one spot long enough to vote, and partly because repeated efforts to secure justice for the workers by means of

legislation had proved of no avail. The bitterness caused by rough treatment in mines and lumber camps and elsewhere found expression in the preamble and in innumerable declarations that have been made by the I. W. W. since that time. The blacklisting of all who dared seek better conditions, the system of spies throughout the camps, the absence of any independent middle class in them to moderate the intensity of class struggle, all helped create the atmosphere in which these revolutionary theories grew.

Membership Characteristics

It is impossible to understand either the philosophy or the tactics of the I. W. W. without understanding the characteristics of its membership. After the withdrawal of the W. F. M., the I. W. W. leaders turned their attention mainly to industries in which migratory unskilled labor predominated—particularly lumbering, railroad construction, and harvesting. A very large percentage of these migratory workers, as Professor Carleton Parker has pointed out, are voteless, womanless, and often jobless, because of industrial conditions into which they have been forced. "The typical I. W. W. member is a neglected and lonely hobo worker, usually malnourished and in need of medical care." [6] Drifting from one job to another, with no settled abode or ties of any kind, sleeping in unsanitary bunkhouses, and receiving hard knocks of various kinds, he suffers from a condition which Professor Parker declares is one of "mental stress and unfocused psychic unrest and could in all accuracy be called a definite industrial psychosis." [7]

The abnormal psychological tension among these workers has been noted by many observers. It manifests

[6] Parker, *The Casual Laborer*, p. 106.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 49.

itself in impatience with slow progress and with a demand for a dramatic upheaval which will result in satisfaction for all the thwarted desires of the oppressed laborer. A large proportion of the members of the I. W. W. are young men, who are detached, irresponsible, and poorly paid. In reaching them the I. W. W. has done what the A. F. of L. has for the most part failed to do. The neglect of the A. F. of L. to seek out the unskilled and bring about a real sense of solidarity and brotherhood between workers of different types is largely responsible for the rapid growth of the I. W. W. in the lower strata of labor. From the beginning it has aimed primarily to reach the most poorly paid. Haywood said at the first convention:

> We are going down into the gutter to get at the mass of the workers and bring them up to a decent plane of living. I do not care the snap of my finger whether or not the skilled workers join this industrial movement at the present time. When we get the unorganized and the unskilled laborer into this organization the skilled worker will of necessity come here for his own protection. As strange as it may seem to you, the skilled worker today is exploiting the laborer beneath him, the unskilled man, just as much as the capitalist is.[8]

A strong sense of brotherhood not only between workers of different degrees of skill but also between workers of different races is characteristic of the I. W. W. Although a large proportion of its members in the West are native Americans, many other nationalities are found within the organization, and its spirit of internationalism is very strong. Many young idealists have been attracted to the movement because of this spirit of all-inclusive brotherhood of the working class, and have found in it not only release from race prejudice but almost a religion.

[8] *Proceedings of the First Convention*, I. W. W., p. 575.

Tactics

The means by which capitalism will ultimately be overthrown, the I. W. W. believe, is to be a general strike of all the workers. This general strike can only take place, however, when the workers are thoroughly prepared for it, and when capitalism is ready to collapse through its own inefficiency. Meanwhile its forces must be undermined and practical concessions gained by means of guerilla warfare in the form of intermittent strikes and sabotage or the "strike on the job." These tactics have naturally resulted from the conditions under which the I. W. W. were working and the characteristics of the membership. Unskilled workers can succeed only by short decisive action, as they have neither the funds nor the command of the labor supply necessary for a long-continued strike. When a strike occurs, the organization aims to paralyze all branches of the industry at once by calling out all workers in the strike-bound shops and shutting off all supplies from those shops. If success is not quickly won the members go back to work and strike again shortly afterwards. In order to facilitate this, all time contracts are forbidden. For many years agreements of any sort with employers were prohibited, but the constitution now specifies the following kinds to be avoided: (1) those with a specific time limit; (2) those binding workers to give notice before making new demands; (3) those binding members to work only for employers who belong to an association of employers; (4) those regulating the selling price of the product. Only one bargain with the employing class is sought—that is, complete surrender. Hence no terms are final, every settlement being merely in the nature of a truce. At any favorable moment the struggle for control of industry may be renewed. Little attempt to secure "recognition of the union" or "job control" by

means of the closed shop is made, for fear that the revolutionary ardor of the members might be diminished.

Various methods of annoying the employer while remaining at work are used when other efforts are ineffective. In some cases this so-called sabotage or "conscientious withdrawal of efficiency" consists merely in slackening production; in others in spoiling the product, or mislabeling freight cars so that goods will not be delivered, or in telling the exact truth to customers when such action will reduce profits. Occasionally it may take the form of putting machinery out of order, but its primary purpose is not malicious destruction of property or injury to human beings, but an attack upon the profits of the employer who refuses to make fair terms with his workers. Mr. Robert Bruere, who spent several months in the West studying the I. W. W. a few years ago, reported that he found no evidence that the men in the lumber camps were guilty of destructive sabotage, such as putting nails in the logs in order to injure the saws, as has often been charged. "Won't we be taking them over one of these days, and what sense would there be in destroying what is going to belong to us?" asked one of the I. W. W. workers.[9] This feeling that machinery will be needed by the workers in the future and must not be destroyed is found among many of the "wobblies." On the other hand, Mr. Bruere did find that in camps where men were dissatisfied, whenever a cable snapped everyone pretended to know nothing about fixing it so that production was delayed till an expert could be secured, whereas when fair conditions existed the men would all rush up to help repair the break. Sabotage as a matter of fact has always existed in the labor movement, and is practiced quite as much by conservative trade unions

[9] *Harper's Magazine*, July, 1918, pp. 250-57.

which do not talk about it as by the I. W. W., probably. In its early days the I. W. W. made no attempt to spread the doctrine of sabotage, but began to do so about 1913,[10] due partly to the influence of the French Syndicalists. In 1920, however, it voted at its annual convention to give up circulating literature advocating such practices—largely, no doubt, on account of the various legal attacks upon the organization.[11]

Violence a Leading Characteristic of the I. W. W.?

Much has been said about the lawlessness and violence of the I. W. W., but impartial investigators agree that such reports have been much exaggerated. According to Mr. Bruere, western lumber owners frankly admitted to the President's Mediation Commission in Seattle that "the peculiar reputation for violence and lawlessness which has been fixed upon the I. W. W. was largely the work of their own ingenious publicity agents." [12] Certain of them declared that every large labor organization will draw to itself a small percentage of irresponsible men—about 2 per cent—and employers took advantage of this fact to brand the I. W. W. as an unpatriotic and unlawful body. Officials of the National Forest Service in Montana, which had employed large numbers of the I. W. W. in fighting fires, reported that the majority of them were faithful and reasonable when treated like human beings, and did valuable service in conserving lumber for the nation.[13] Similar testimony was furnished at the trial of Wm. Haywood and others in 1918 by several farmers who had employed I. W. W. harvesters. The report of the President's Mediation Commission in 1917 declared that:

[10] *Evidence and Cross Examination of Wm. D. Haywood*, p. 142.
[11] *Solidarity*, May 29, 1920.
[12] *New York Evening Post*, Feb. 16, 1918.
[13] *Ibid.*, March 1, 9, 1918.

Membership in the I. W. W. by no means implies belief in or understanding of its philosophy. To a majority of the members it is a bond of groping fellowship. According to the estimates of conservative students of the phenomenon, a very small per cent of the I. W. W. are really understanding followers of subversive doctrine. The I. W. W. is seeking results by dramatizing evils and by romantic promises of relief.[14]

It is this very power of dramatizing evils and promising a glorious future that has attracted multitudes of discontented men to the organization. To many a homeless, friendless man the I. W. W. furnishes the only fellowship which he knows, as well as the only hope for improved conditions of work, and he eagerly allies himself with it without paying any great attention to its ultimate philosophy. On the other hand, there is undoubtedly a small group within the organization which is guilty of wild utterances which bring discredit upon all its members. This group is very scornful of the "reformist" wing of the I. W. W. which believes that the revolution necessary for transferring the instruments of production to the workers will come peacefully through the collapse of capitalism or the folded arms of the workers rather than through more violent methods. As a matter of fact, the I. W. W. has proved much less extreme in its actions than in its words, and for the most part its strikes seem to have been characterized by a marked absence of violence. Even if they admit its theoretical justification, the officials of the organization counsel against the use of violence and destruction on the ground that it is not only an ineffective method, and one which will array all the resources of government against them, but also that it is a method which will unfit the workers for constructive effort in the new society for which they hope. The widespread con-

[14] *President's Mediation Commission, Report of,* 1917, p. 14.

demnation of the I. W. W. and the conviction of many of its members appears to have been due much more to their theories and the fear of what they might do than to what they have done.

Dramatic Struggles

It is impossible even to mention the numerous dramatic struggles in which the I. W. W. have been engaged. After its second convention, as has been said, the organization declined steadily for several years, till its membership was pitifully small. In 1912, however, it leaped suddenly into prominence. More than thirty strikes of the I. W. W. took place in that year and the membership increased from a little over 4,000 to over 18,000.[15] Most important of these strikes was that in the textile industry in Lawrence, Mass., in which 23,000 workers were involved. The advent of Ettor and Haywood of the I. W. W. upon the scene and their preaching of passive resistance resulted in a decided reduction of violence, according to many witnesses.[16] When the strike was won, the I. W. W. claimed 14,000 members in Lawrence alone —though they failed to maintain their hold upon these new members for any length of time.

Beginning with the long struggle in Spokane, Wash., in 1909, a favorite method of the I. W. W. for several years was to carry on battles for free speech by insisting on holding street meetings, and going to jail in a body when interfered with by the authorities, in order to "cause expense to the taxpayers, which is but another name for the employing class."[17] The efforts to suppress such free speech meetings culminated in the tragedy at Everett in

[15] Brissenden, *op. cit.*, Table D, Appendix 4.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 285.

[17] St. John, *The I. W. W., Its History, Structure and Methods* (Chicago, 1919), p. 19.

1916, when a boat-load of I. W. W. members, arriving to hold a meeting of protest at the brutal fashion in which their comrades had been clubbed and maltreated, was met at the dock by the sheriff and a band of deputies and fired upon. Although each side claimed that the first shot came from the other, witnesses agree that at the first sign of trouble all the men in the boat rushed to the rear end, evidently not intending any violence, and many of them were shot down in the water while trying to escape. This is not the place to go into details as to the methods of suppression which have been used against the I. W. W. —the brutal clubbings, the horse whippings, the tarring and featherings, the raiding of halls and indiscriminate arrests, the lynchings, the deportations such as that at Bisbee, Arizona, where 1,100 men (less than one-half of whom were members of the I. W. W.) were herded into cattle cars and carried off into the desert where they were left without food or water—but it is impossible to understand the temper of the organization without knowing something of the kind of treatment which its members have received.

Internationalism and National Loyalty

During the war the opposition to the I. W. W. was intensified by its apparent lack of patriotism, and many charges were brought against it of conspiring to obstruct war production and hinder the draft. Ninety-five of its members were convicted at one time on such charges and sentenced to from one to twenty years in prison. The defense claimed that no such conspiracy had been formed and no sabotage had been carried on in war industries, and whatever strikes had taken place were not for the purpose of hampering the war but for legitimate ends. Many members served in the war, and many I. W. W. transport

workers loaded munitions of war faithfully with no attempt at obstruction. Wm. Haywood in his speech of defense declared that although the organization had always been opposed to wars between nations, it had made an effort to stop the circulation of anti-war literature when America entered the world conflict.[18] The I. W. W. believe that a strong international organization of the workers would be the most effective peace measure possible, and feel no enthusiasm for uniting with the capitalists of their own nation to fight the workers of another. At the convention of 1914 a resolution had been adopted which said in part: "The industrial movement will wipe out all boundaries and will establish an international relationship between all races engaged in industry. We as members of the industrial army will refuse to fight for any purpose except for the realization of industrial freedom." [19] Nevertheless, in spite of the irresponsible utterances of a few of their fellow-members, the evidence that the men who were convicted actually conspired to hamper the war has seemed inconclusive to many impartial observers, including Captain Lanier, formerly of the Military Intelligence Division of the United States Army, who has protested against their conviction.[20] Altogether 168 members of the I. W. W., who were indicted by Federal Grand Juries during the war, were sentenced to prison and scores of others were sent to state penitentiaries under the "criminal syndicalism" laws which were hastily passed by many states from 1917-19.[21] Much of the energy of the organization has gone into working for the defense of these men in the last few years.

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[18] *Evidence and Cross Examination of Wm. D. Haywood,* p. 97.
[19] Brissenden, *op. cit.,* p. 326.
[20] *New Republic,* April 19, 1919. "Open Letter to the President."
[21] *Solidarity,* Oct. 30, 1920.

New Interest in Industrial Research

Within the last year or two an interesting new development has taken place in the I. W. W. Since the beginning it has maintained that the workers must be organized, not merely for the everyday struggle with capitalism, but also for carrying on production in the future; and some attempts have been made to map out the structure of the industrial system of the new society, but such efforts have been highly theoretical and the chief emphasis has been upon the destructive side of the movement. A group within the organization which is growing in influence maintains, however, that the most important thing to do at present is to make an intensive study of the technical problems of each industry, with the aid of experts, so that when the time comes for the workers to undertake the management of these industries they will know something of how to do it. To quote from a recent I. W. W. pamphlet:

> Working class control of industry must be founded upon a sound scientific understanding of industrial processes. The workers when their turn comes to manage things must be in a position to organize industry upon a broader and more efficient basis than has been the case while it was in the hands of our profit-grabbing masters of today. . . .
>
> We, the workers, are to inherit this gigantic and intricate industrial machine. We must study and understand its every detail so that we may now build up, under wage-slavery, the army of production which is to assume immediate control when wage slavery is overthrown.[22]

At the general convention in 1920 it was decided to institute a Bureau of Industrial Research which was to undertake a survey of the principal industries, including raw materials, location of plants, machinery, and all mat-

[22] *One Big Union of All the Workers,* published by the I. W. W., pp. 4, 8.

ters connected with those industries. The amount of $2,000 was later appropriated by the General Executive Board for this work. Engineers engaged for the task have already completed the first sections of a survey of the lumber industry and have begun a study of transportation.[23] According to an ardent advocate of the new movement:

> The next stage of development will logically be a reorganization according to the lines of industry, so that a member will not merely represent railroad transportation but engine number so and so, on such and such a railroad. Such an organization could tell what operating strength it had in any industry, any plant or any department, and what strategic places were unrepresented and could go after the necessary personnel to fill essential vacancies. If a technician were lacking, steps could be taken to get him.[24]

Greater New York Unemployment Conference

In connection with the drive to enlist the technician in the enterprise, the I. W. W. delegates to the Unemployment Conference of Greater New York in February, 1921, at which twenty-six labor bodies were represented, persuaded the gathering to invite all the societies of engineers in the city to a conference in order to help work out a plan for the reopening of industry. According to a report of this first conference in the *New York World*:

> The "wobblies". . . said nothing of revolution or class consciousness, of exploitation through ownership of the means of production, or of the necessary overthrow of the capitalist system. They talked instead of "uninterrupted production," the "coordination of the industrial processes, and the necessity for accurate research and an exact determination of the facts [if the terrible waste of human life due to unemployment was to be stopped. To be sure they did not convince their followers immediately.] "What good will it do to organize production under capitalism?" sneered

[23] *Socialist Review*, May, 1921, "The New Turn of the I. W. W."
[24] *Ibid*, p. 71.

one revolutionist. "Look-a-here," retorted a "wobbly," "if we quit work when the capitalists can't afford to have us we call it a strike, and it's the only weapon we ever knew we had. But if we go to work when they can't afford to have us go to work, that's revolution, and it's the weapon we've got to learn how to use." "But the capitalists own the machines," cried a disciple of Karl Marx. "Let 'em own 'em; if we use 'em, we should worry," [was the answer]. "Whenever a crisis comes along we hear a lot about the working class getting together to own the industries, but what good will it do us to own 'em if there ain't no way they can be run?" [25]

They wanted the best industrial brains in the country to help them find out how to run them.

Resolution of 1921

At the 13th general convention of the I. W. W. in May, 1921, it was decided to continue the work of the Industrial Research Bureau, by means of voluntary contributions, directing its attention to securing industrial facts which would serve the double purpose of building up the I. W. W. now and preparing the workers for carrying on production in the future. A resolution adopted at the convention, after speaking of the terrible unemployment and suffering throughout the world, reads in part as follows:

Obviously, the capitalist system of production for profit has broken down. Always unstable, it has been unable to withstand the extraordinary strain of shattered finance and commerce. Since profit and not service is the cornerstone upon which the capitalist system is founded, with its profits not forthcoming the system is no longer able to function to feed the people and provide them with the other necessities of life. Nothing has so completely shown the criminal incompetency of the capitalist system as the conditions which have followed the great war, and which are certain to produce still more baneful social effects in the next few months.

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[25] *New York World*, Feb. 27, 1921, article by C. W. Wood.

Yet the war with all its appalling loss of life and property has not wiped out the potential resources of soil and mine and forest; it has not impaired the ability of the producing class to bring forth in abundance all things needed for a full and rich civilization; it has left no excuse (apart from the alleged necessity of maintaining the profit system) for the starvation, unemployment and misery among the workers of the world.

Affirming that the only way in which humanity can be provided with the good things which it needs is for the workers to take control of the machinery of production, the resolution declares that the I. W. W. proposes:

1. To make an immediate survey of economic resources and industrial processses.

2. To form and perfect Economic Councils . . . looking to immediate control and operation of industries for use and not for profit.

3. To carry on in connection with the above a ceaseless campaign of education among the workers with a view to arousing their initiative and gathering their organized might that the new system may be put in smooth working order and accomplish the transition from capitalism to the new society with as little social friction as possible.

For the realization of this great and humane program the I. W. W. invites the co-operation of the manual and intellectual worker; of the engineer and technician, as well as of the laborer and machine operator. We call upon all these elements to pool their intellectual, financial and moral resources for concerted preparation for relieving the bankrupt capitalist class of its industrial and social supremacy.[26]

Opposition to the New Tendency

Firm in their belief that the workers can learn to carry on production not only more justly but also more efficiently than the capitalist class, the I. W. W. are thus seeking to gain all the knowledge they can in preparation

[26] *Solidarity*, May 21, 1921.

for the future. The new tendency within the organization has manifested itself in various ways, including the adoption of the name *Industrial Pioneer* for the chief monthly publication, in place of the *One Big Union Monthly,* and the printing of many articles on industrial technique. The change in emphasis is not taking place without opposition, however, for the agitator who wishes to create "thrills" in his audience does not find the study of blue-prints exciting, and fears that the I. W. W. is "turning yellow." An editorial appearing in the *Industrial Unionist,* organ of the New York District Council of the I. W. W., at the time of the last convention, charges those who are urging research with trying to "turn the I. W. W. from its course of revolutionary industrial unionism into some spiritless industrial pacifism," in order to "play safe" and escape the consequences of uncompromising loyalty to revolutionary principles.[27]

The editorial goes on to say:

> We met an alleged I. W. W. the other day who said, "It is wrong to propagate the class struggle; you are creating hatred between people when it is only the system to blame." He was one of those in New York who champion industrial research and industrial survey. . . . We are going to Leavenworth—many of us to give up the best years of manhood—but not for industrial pacifism, not for those who conceive that gathering maps of capitalist machinery is equal to possession of that machinery. You may take a picture of the factory but you haven't got the factory. After you have all the data and all the maps—good as they are—what then? They may do some good after the revolution, but only afterward. While we are in the cells of capitalist prisons, we hope those outside will do something more effective than chattering about "industrial technique." And we expect every wobbly worthy of carrying the red card to summarily sit upon those who are inherently unable to carry the cross of revolutionary activity and who try to befuddle others with alluring phrases.

[27] *Industrial Unionist,* Vol. 1, No. 7.

Nevertheless in spite of such opposition the change in the direction of constructive planning for the reorganization of industry is going steadily on, backed by several of the general officers and finding a ready response among many of the rank and file, and is a most hopeful sign.

Present Strength

It is difficult to estimate accurately the strength of the I. W. W. at the present time. After its increase in 1912, the organization declined somewhat in numbers for a couple of years, due partly to industrial depression. In 1915 it began to grow again, but not till 1916 did it take any very decided leap upwards. In that year it grew from 15,000 to 60,000.[28] According to Mr. Roy Brown, Chairman of the General Executive Board, the paid-up membership for the years 1917 to 1920 inclusive was about 50,000. He estimated that there were about 50,000 delinquent members, also, due to the fact that the majority of those in the I. W. W. are migratory workers who are forced by the conditions of their work to be somewhat irregular in the payment of dues. An official pamphlet by Vincent St. John gives the paid-up membership for 1919 as 100,000, however, and the total number of cards issued up to October, 1919, as 500,000, which he states represents the total number of workers in the organization in good and bad standing.[29] Other estimates of the actual membership have run up over 200,000 at various times in the last few years but are obviously much exaggerated. The character of the membership is very transient, and the turnover for both locals and individuals has been very heavy from the beginning. The potential strength of the organization and its influence

[28] Brissenden, *op. cit.*, Table D, Appendix 4.
[29] St. John, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

in the world of labor is much greater than its paid-up membership, but nevertheless it can scarcely count on the total number of men who have ever connected themselves with it. A newspaper report of the 13th convention in the spring of 1921 gave the number in the organization as only 12,000, and commented on its pathetic decline,[30] attributing it largely to the campaign of suppression that had been going on, and to the fact that most of the brains of the movement were in prison. It is impossible to put much confidence in these figures, especially as the general secretary of the organization does not admit any such decrease, but the industrial depression has undoubtedly reduced the number of men able to pay dues to the I. W. W. Unlike some unions, this body refuses to excuse unemployed members from payment of dues, and hence loses heavily in numbers when unemployment is widespread. It may be true that the suppressive measures of the government have somewhat affected the numbers of those openly holding red cards, but the fact that no marked decrease took place in the membership between 1917 and 1921 indicates that other factors are much more responsible for whatever decline may recently have occurred.

Suspension of Certain Groups

The suspension of the Marine Transport Workers of Philadelphia for insisting on charging a $25 initiation fee in violation of the constitution, and of the Italian Bakers' local of New York for charging a $15 fee, had cut off several thousand members from the organization during the six months preceding the 13th convention.[31] The delegates spent two days of earnest debate over the question whether or not the action of the General Executive Board

[30] *New York Herald,* May 17, 1921.
[31] *Solidarity,* May 21, 1921.

in suspending these branches should be sustained, and finally voted that it should, although it meant a heavy loss in membership. The Marine Transport Workers claimed that the $2 fee required by the constitution was a failure, as it was so low that men slipped in and out easily and did not bother to keep up their dues, knowing that they could easily be readmitted. The high dues of the A. F. of L. unions resulted in much larger numbers than the low ones of the I. W. W., the transport workers maintained. Furthermore a high fee was necessary to protect their jobs from outside workers who would flood the water-front and make it impossible to maintain decent conditions if they were given a foothold in the union. Already there were some 5,000 men for only 1,000 jobs. The only way to maintain "job control" was to limit the number admitted to the union and keep all others off the docks. "The I. W. W. is notoriously unable to retain shop control," declares a supporter of the high fee in *Solidarity* for December 4, 1920. The only group that has maintained it with a 100 per cent organization is that of the transport workers of Philadelphia, he affirms. The New York bakers, who also charged a high initiation fee for the sake of "job control," are mostly of the highly skilled class, making the finer grades of pastry, and have enjoyed the best conditions of any bakers in New York. It is interesting to see how, as soon as a group succeeds in getting certain advantages for itself, whether it belongs to the I. W. W. or not, it is tempted to maintain those advantages even at the expense of its theories of solidarity. One of the fundamental principles of the I. W. W. is that there should be a uniform initiation fee set so low that no worker may be debarred by it, and a system of free transfer from one branch of the organization to another. Although doubtless the charging of a higher fee by the transport workers

and Italian bakers has helped them strengthen their own local organizations and has thus proved practically expedient, and although many of their supporters claim that it will be necessary to yield to such a policy if the movement is ever to grow in the East, their action has meant a repudiation of this fundamental I. W. W. principle and hence has been officially condemned by the I. W. W.

Chief Industrial Unions within the I. W. W.

The I. W. W. is now very much stronger in the West than in the East. A great many textile workers in the East were swept into it during the strikes of 1912 and 1913, but no firm organization was built up in that industry and the majority of them drifted away. The eastern problem is recognized as one of the most pressing which the movement has to face today. The I. W. W. has proved much more successful in dramatizing the class struggle and firing enthusiasm during a crisis, than in building up a stable organization maintaining permanent hold over its members. In many places it is merely a propagandist group, instead of functioning actually as a labor union. In the West it has some strong industrial unions, however, especially those of the lumber and agricultural workers. Other important industrial unions belonging to the I. W. W. are those of the metal mine workers, the coal mine workers, the general construction workers, and the foodstuff workers. The smaller unions within the organization are those of the marine transport workers, railroad workers, building construction workers, fisherman, and textile workers, according to a statement made by the chairman of the General Executive Board in March, 1921. Vincent St. John lists several others existing in October, 1919, including those of metal and machinery, shipbuilding, furniture, leather, printing, rubber,

and general distribution workers,[32] and the General Executive Board Report in May, 1920, mentions industrial unions of tobacco and glass workers, also.

Publications

There are fourteen official periodicals of the I. W. W., according to this 1920 report. Most important of these are *Solidarity* and *The Industrial Pioneer,* published in Chicago by the general officials; *The Industrial Unionist,* of New York, which is supposed to represent the workers in the great industries in the East; and *The Industrial Worker,* of Seattle, representing workers in the North West. The others are chiefly in foreign languages.

General Structure of Organization

The unit of organization was formerly the local but is now the industrial union, formed of all the workers of a given industry. The ideal of the I. W. W. is that these unions should ignore national boundaries and eventually include all workers in their special industries all over the world. At present, however, they do not extend beyond the American continent, and in some cases may be limited to one section of the country. A plan for combining unions of closely allied industries into departments of manufacture, mining, agriculture, construction, transportation, and public service, was worked out several years ago, but it has not been put into operation, though it was decided at the 1921 convention to submit the proposal to a referendum of the membership. Each industrial union has charge of its own affairs, electing its own officers and holding its own annual conventions. A uniform initiation fee of $2, and uniform monthly dues of $1, must be paid by the members of all I. W. W. unions, however. The rule

[32] St. John, *op. cit.,* p. 34.

is that officers may be paid no more than the approximate amount they would receive if employed in industry—a marked contrast to the policy of most A. F. of L. unions, which allow a decided difference in financial status between officers and the rank and file. The industrial unions have what are known as industrial branches established in the centers most convenient for the workers, and these branches are further subdivided into:

1. Shop or job sections, with committees elected by all the members working on the job.
2. Language sections, where people of different tongues are included.
3. Department sections, in large industries operated by departments.
4. District sections, where an industry covers a large local area and workers would otherwise have to travel long distances to attend meetings.

These different subdivisions always act together through the industrial branch or union in dealing with the employer. In order to bring about concerted action on the part of the workers in all industries, district councils made up of delegates from all industrial branches and unions in each district are also formed. All branches elect the same number of delegates to the district council and also to the Executive Committee of their own industrial union, regardless of size. Besides the industrial unions with their branches, there is a general recruiting union with numerous branches—sixty in 1919 [33]—for those in industries not having enough members to have a union of their own. A few years ago there were many more mixed unions in the I. W. W. than unions made up of men of a single industry, but the tendency seems to be toward

[33] St. John, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

grouping members along industrial lines. The mixed groups of course served more as propaganda centers than as agencies for control of working conditions.

Tendency Against Centralized Control

The I. W. W. has become less and less centralized as time has gone on. The original constitution provided for a highly centralized scheme of administration, which put large powers into the hands of the general officials. The first step away from this was taken in 1906, when the office of president was abolished, and since then a fight has been continually waged between those who wished a loose federation and those who desired a well-knit organization. At the convention of 1913 an effort was made to abolish the General Executive Board also, and retain merely a secretary-treasurer and organizer who should be responsible to the rank and file.[34] Certain locals wished to reduce the general administration to a "mere clerical agency"; to abolish the convention and replace it by the initiative and referendum, as not all locals could afford to send delegates to it; to put all agitators under the control of the rank and file; and finally to reduce the funds of the general office by cutting down the per capita tax paid by mixed locals, which were connected directly with the central organization. A two weeks' debate took place between the supporters of a strong central government and the advocates of a loose association of sovereign local unions. According to Mr. Brissenden, it was largely a struggle between the western membership which was "tainted with anarchism" and the eastern which was "infected with state socialism."[35] There has been from the beginning bitter animosity between rival factions

[34] Brissenden, *op. cit.*, p. 307.
[35] Brissenden, *op. cit.*, p. 304.

within the I. W. W., those on one side criticizing the "syndicalists" for trying to disrupt the I. W. W., and those on the other declaring that the real militants must "exert all their energies to stem the tide of conservatism and faintheartedness in the I. W. W. organization." [36] Although the decentralizers accomplished little at the convention of 1913 except the adoption of a provision for initiative and referendum, their pressure has had its effect.

Mr. Roy Brown, chairman of the General Executive Board, in a letter to the writer on March 8, 1921, states:

> The central organization, as you term it, has no control over the Industrial Unions whatever. The Industrial Unions are controlled by the membership and the General Organization is controlled by the Industrial Unions thru their membership. In other words, the general membership of the I. W. W. controls the entire organization through their different General Organization Committees, Executives Board, etc.

Officials may not remain in office more than one year, partly so that they may not get out of touch with productive processes and the wishes of the rank and file, and partly so that other workers may be given a chance to develop their ability. No official may be a delegate to the general convention, and no member may be a delegate twice in succession.[37] These provisions of course aim to prevent the building up of a machine which will fail to represent the rank and file. There is a high degree of local autonomy which makes it possible for the workers of a branch to go on strike without consulting higher officials, sure of the backing of other workers in their industry and in other industries if necessary.[38] The General Execu-

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[36] *Ibid.*, p. 316, quoting from *Mother Earth*, October, 1913, "The I. W. W. Convention."

[37] *Solidarity*, June 5, 1920.

[38] *Ibid.*, July 24, 1920.

tive Board, however, has the power to order unions out on strike in order to help their striking fellow-members if it sees fit, and reserves the right to pass on any agreements that may be made with employers, so that the organization is not wholly lacking in centralized control. The General Executive Board is made up of seven members, six of whom represent the six largest unions and are elected by them, and the seventh the smaller industrial unions, who act jointly in electing him. There is also a general secretary-treasurer who is nominated by the convention and elected by vote of the entire membership. All officials may be recalled at any time. Constitutional amendments must be referred to the rank and file, and any industrial union may demand a referendum on other matters, which must be held if the demand is endorsed by a "sufficient" number of seconds, as the constitution rather vaguely states. In regard to these provisions the I. W. W. does not differ particularly from other progressive unions.

Success and Failure

As has been said, the I. W. W. has been more successful in propaganda than in controlling the working conditions of its members, in spite of temporary success in some of its strikes. One of its former members, in an article criticizing the organization, declares with considerable truth that the I. W. W. "has been too revolutionary to be a success as a union" and "has been too conservative to be a success as a revolution." The average I. W. W. advocate, he declares, is a victim of extreme self-deception, believing that "the workers are shouting for revolution when they are only cheering for pork chops."[39] The demand for immediate practical re-

[39] Harold Lord Varney, *New York World*, Feb. 8, 1920.

sults on the part of the masses thus tends to make the I. W. W. slightly more conservative than a purely propaganda organization, but its essential radicalism prevents its winning and holding as large numbers as are gained by the A. F. of L. or by some of the independent unions. Even the editor of the official organ, *Solidarity,* admitted a few years ago that "at present we are to the labor movement what the high diver is to the circus—a sensation marvelous and thrilling. We attract the crowds . . . but as far as making industrial unionism fit the life of the worker we have failed miserably." [40] The I. W. W. has high ideals of fraternity, and there are many constructive possibilities in its hope for the control of industry by the workers, but it has not yet learned how to build up an organization controlling a large enough proportion of the workers to make it very effective from a practical point of view.

Workers' International Industrial Union—Membership

On the other hand, it has won a much greater degree of practical success than the Detroit organization which kept the name of I. W. W. till 1915, and then changed it to Workers' International Industrial Union in order to escape the odium attached to the older title. The greatest strength of this organization was in 1912, when it had nearly 11,000 members, while the Chicago I. W. W. had only a little over 18,000.[41] From that time it steadily decreased, however, and now claims somewhat less than 2,000 in regular standing, according to the report of the general secretary in June, 1920. In addition to these there may be some thousands of members whose dues are not

[40] *Solidarity,* Aug. 23, 1913.
[41] Brissenden, *op. cit.,* Appendix 4, Table D.

regularly paid, the secretary states, but he admits sadly that the "membership is not as numerous as we had been led to believe on past occasions," and the finances are in a deplorable condition.[42] At the convention of the Workers' International Industrial Union held in June, 1920, twenty-seven delegates from twelve states, ranging from Massachusetts to Nebraska, were present. Twenty-nine locals were listed in the *Industrial Union News,* official organ of the W. I. I. U., in that year.

Structure

The structure of the W. I. I. U. is similar to that of the I. W. W. National unions are formed for different industries, and kindred national unions are grouped, theoretically at least, into departments, representatives of which form the General Executive Committee of the whole organization. Universal transfer cards are issued from one union to another. Locals are established in different centers, and these locals are subdivided into shop branches or as the particular requirements of the industry make necessary. Until 1914 the constitution provided for subdivision into trade branches according to the tool used or the nature of the service rendered, which DeLeon had held to be the true form of industrial unionism. A long debate was recently held on the question of returning to that type of organization, and decided differences of opinion in regard to the nature of industrial unionism were expressed.[43]

Relations with the I. W. W.

There has been very bitter feeling between the Detroit and Chicago groups ever since they separated in 1908.

[42] *Industrial Union News,* June 26, 1920.
[43] *Industrial Union News,* Nov. 20, 1920.

On some occasions they have come into direct conflict, as in the silk strike in Patterson in 1913. By representing itself to be the only I. W. W., the Detroit body was able to "deceive several thousand textile workers" in Patterson and other places, and then "betrayed the workers into the hands of the mill owners," declares Vincent St. John.[44] Each organization has nothing but contempt for the other, and loses no opportunity to express that contempt. In its manifesto issued in 1915, the W. I. I. U. declares that it "refuses to conduct the class struggle on the lines of a dog fight. It does not sanction lawlessness on the part of employers, capitalists and their hirelings by doing likewise. It condemns sabotage and all such childish practices by anyone as useless for the working class and harmful to real progress." In these statements it is obviously attacking the I. W. W. "The workers' strength lies in individual and collective intelligence, organized class action, agitation and education. The political and industrial unity of the wealth producers provides all the weapons necessary in the fight for emancipation," it goes on to say. Propaganda for true industrial unionism has nothing to do with "sabotage or other slum tactics," and Socialist industrial unionists will need many years to repair the damage done to labor by the I. W. W. methods, the *Industrial Union News* declares.[45]

Comparison with the I. W. W.

The original I. W. W. preamble was kept by the organization till 1915, when it was slightly amended, but in general the philosophy therein expressed is very similar to that of the present I. W. W. Emphasis is placed on the necessity of organizing in such a way that all the

[44] St. John, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
[45] *Industrial Union News*, Feb. 5, 1921.

members in any one industry or in all industries may cease work to aid their striking brothers, "thus making an injury to one an injury to all," and of steadily aiming at the overthrow of the capitalist wage system. The necessity for political as well as economic action is insisted upon, however. Industrial unionism is "the economic phase of the Socialist movement, fighting on the industrial field for the Socialist republic," the Manifesto states. From the beginning the organization has been closely connected with the Socialist Labor Party, though it has continuously refused to recognize the party name in its official statements, and its energies are almost wholly devoted to radical propaganda rather than to effective union activity. The relative weakness of the W. I. I. U. in comparison with the I. W. W. is partly due to this very fact. Not only has it failed to further the immediate interests of its members, but in its zeal for propaganda it has allied itself with the smaller and less influential of the two Socialist parties, and for that reason has failed to enroll many radicals who might otherwise have been attracted to such a movement. The organization was held together largely by the personality of Daniel DeLeon in its early years, and after his death there was no one to take his place as a cohesive factor. Both the W. I. I. U. and the I. W. W. have been weakened by the defection of members who have come to the conclusion that the way of progress lies rather in reforming the A. F. of L. than in building up a rival organization, and have therefore turned back to the orthodox labor movement. These men are seeking to "bore from within" the craft organizations and spread the gospel of industrial unionism among the great mass of the organized workers of the country. Needless to say, both the I. W. W. and the W. I. I. U. have nothing but scorn for such efforts.

CHAPTER VI

THE ONE BIG UNION

Canadian Origin

Although the term "One Big Union" has for many years been claimed by the I. W. W., a new organization bearing that name sprang up in western Canada early in 1919, and some months later spread to the United States. This organization has been called by some of its enemies merely the Canadian branch of the I. W. W., but in reality there is little love lost between the two bodies. Like the I. W. W., the One Big Union is an inter-industrial organization, seeking to unite all industrial workers on a platform of radical class consciousness, but there are various points of difference between them, as will be noted later, and the I. W. W. is quite contemptuous of the newer organization.

The One Big Union movement in Canada grew out of long-continued discontent with the policies of the Trades and Labour Congress of the Dominion on the part of the western labor bodies. On the ground that the Congress always met in the East, and that the West was therefore unable to have proper representation or to make its will effective, a special convention of delegates from all western labor bodies was called to meet at Calgary, Alberta, on March 13, 1919. Representatives from all the western provinces were instrumental in making arrangements for it, but the final call for it was issued by the British Columbia Federation of Labor. This Western Inter-Provincial Labour Conference, as it was called, was attended by 237 delegates from the different labor

organizations in the four western provinces and 2 from Ontario. When the convention was first planned it was not intended as a secession movement but as a means of uniting the western labor groups for progressive action within the Trades and Labour Congress. As soon as the convention opened, however, it became apparent that the delegates wished a complete reorganization of the labor movement along industrial lines. A resolution introduced by the British Columbia Federation of Labour provided that the convention recommend to its membership the severance of their affiliation with the international unions connected with the A. F. of L. and the Trades and Labour Congress, and the formation of an industrial organization of all workers. This resolution roused much discussion, but after being amended to provide for a referendum of the entire Canadian membership on the subject, it was passed without a dissenting vote. A Policy Committee which was then appointed presented a report recommending The One Big Union as the name of the new organization, and providing for committees to carry on propaganda in connection with the referendum which was to be taken.

Adoption of Radical Resolutions

Various other significant resolutions were passed at the convention. The first to be introduced read as follows:

> Realizing that the aims and objects of the labour movement should be the improving of the social and economic conditions of society in general, and the working class in particular,
>
> And whereas the present system of production for profit and the institutions resulting therefrom prevent this being achieved,
>
> Be it resolved that the aims of labour as represented in this convention are the abolition of the present system of production for profit and the substituting therefor of production for use, and that a system of propaganda to this end be carried on.

This resolution, which was unanimously adopted, well expresses the spirit of the movement. Another one after emphasizing the need for industrial organization, made the following statement: "We place ourselves on record as being opposed to the innocuity of labour leaders lobbying Parliament for palliatives which do not palliate"—a sentence which was seized upon by enemies of the organization as an indication that it was opposed to all parliamentary methods. Mr. Pritchard, one of the leading spirits in the movement, in his speech before the jury when on trial for seditious conspiracy, declared that at the Calgary convention there were one or two delegates who wanted to repudiate parliaments altogether, and some others at the opposite pole who wanted the convention to start a new political party, but the majority, however, felt that more could be accomplished by strengthening their economic organization than by taking any definite stand on political matters, one way or the other.[1] He denied that the convention opposed political action in its proper place.

Still more excitement was aroused by the resolution about Russia which was passed unanimously and without discussion. This resolution endorsed the system of industrial Soviet control, declared the principle of "proletarian dictatorship" to be "absolute and efficient for the transformation of capitalist private property to communal wealth," and sent fraternal greetings to the Russian Soviets and to the German Spartacides. Later in the proceedings the convention voted unanimously to demand the immediate withdrawal of Allied troops from Russia, and declared in favor of a general strike on June 1, 1919, if the Allies persisted in their attempts to overthrow the

[1] *W. A. Pritchard's Address to the Jury,* March 23-24, 1920, Winnipeg, p. 108.

Soviet government. The fact that such dangerous resolutions were so hastily passed indicates that in this case, as in the case of many other labor organizations about this time, enthusiasm for a successful working class movement roused spontaneous expressions of approval without any very clear appreciation of what such approval involved. To be sure, some of the leaders were able to discuss Soviet principles at some length—as Mr. Pritchard did in his speech of defense, when he argued that dictatorship of the proletariat was merely dictatorship of the majority, and suppression of the dictatorship of financiers [2]—but it is probable that most of those who voted for these resolutions did so with comparatively little thought about their meaning. At any rate the general strike in behalf of Russia never took place, even though there was no apparent change in government policy. Other important resolutions declared for a six-hour day and five-day week, release of political prisoners, and freedom of speech, and threatened a general strike on June 1 unless these demands also were granted. When the referendum in regard to the formation of the One Big Union was held, a vote was also taken on the question of the strike for the six-hour day, but as the results of this vote were not made public, and no strike took place, it is to be assumed that the enthusiasm of the rank and file for general strikes was less strong than the convention had expected.

Growth in Western Canada

In the eastern portion of the Dominion comparatively little interest in the new movement was shown, but according to Secretary Midgley the vote in the four western provinces was overwhelmingly in favor of the O. B. U.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 120.

Up to May 30, 258 unions in the western provinces (not including Winnipeg from which returns had not been received) voted on the question, the estimated membership of these unions being 41,365. Of these, 24,239, belonging to 188 unions, had voted in favor of forming the new organization.[3] The call which was sent out for a conference to perfect the plans for organization, stated that the vote of those working in the vital industries from Port Arthur, Ont., to Victoria, B. C., had "surpassed our most optimistic anticipations." The first unit of the O. B. U. was established in Vancouver immediately after the convention, with a reputed membership of 1,700 composed of machinists, boilermakers, and blacksmiths. Somewhat later the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council withdrew from its old affiliation and joined the new body. The older trade unions made vigorous efforts to check the growth of the movement, canceling the charters of all locals which connected themselves with it, but nevertheless the movement spread rapidly, many locals going over to it. By the end of 1919, 8 central labour councils, 2 district boards, and 101 local units, with a reported membership of 41,150, were affiliated with the O. B. U.[4] The membership was largely in the West, though there were two units in Montreal and a few in other places in the East.

Branch Organization in the United States

In September, 1919, the first steps were taken toward organizing the O. B. U. in the United States, when Mr. R. B. Russell was sent to Chicago to attend a meeting called for that purpose. A few months later the O. B. U.

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[3] Dept. of Labour, Canada, *9th Annual Report on Labour Organization in Canada*, p. 25.

[4] *Ibid., 10th Annual Report on Labour Organization in* Canada, p. 23.

sent another organizer, who succeeded in getting a Chicago lodge of sheet metal workers to secede from their International and enrolled many of its members in the new movement. Another representative was sent to New York at the request of certain independent unions there. In June, 1920, the United States branch of the O. B. U. was formally launched at a convention held in Chicago, attended by 43 delegates, representing 40,000 men, it was claimed.[5] The membership was chiefly made up of machinists and roundhouse men on the railroads. Prior to the convention, units had been established in nine cities in the western portion of the United States, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, Oakland, Butte, Milwaukee, Toledo, and Neihart.[6] The same preamble as that of the Canadian body was adopted, but a separate Executive Board for the United States, to have full charge of matters affecting the membership in this country, was elected. This board has been working in close harmony with the Canadian board, however. It had been decided the previous January that the locals in the United States should elect a representative to serve on the Canadian Executive Board, but it soon became apparent that the organization work south of the Canadian border must be handled by the United States membership directly and financed by it.

Strength in the United States

It is difficult to get accurate figures as to the present membership of the O. B. U. in the United States. The Canadian Department of Labour in its report for 1920 declared that little had been heard of the United States branch of the organization since the June convention

[5] *Industrial Union News*, July 24, 1920.
[6] Dept. of Labour, *10th Annual Report on Labour Organization in Canada*, p. 30.

when it was organized. On the other hand, the report of the U. S. Executive Board of the O. B. U., published in the *O. B. U. Bulletin* of Winnipeg, January 1, 1921, stated that there were thirty-three units in the country paying per capita tax to the central office, exclusive of the northern district of California, from which no tax was coming though the movement there was far from dead. Early in 1922, one of the O. B. U. organizers estimated that there were slightly less than 30,000 members of his organization in the United States. Units were in existence in Lawrence, Mass., and Altoona, Pa., and in about twenty-eight western cities. In Lawrence a group of textile workers had broken away from the Amalgamated Textile Workers' local in order to join the O. B. U.[7]

The report of the U. S. Executive Board in 1921 expressed opposition to a resolution passed by the Los Angeles units in favor of the consolidation of all independent labor groups, and declared that the amalgamation of conflicting elements could arrive at no satisfactory working program. "A sinister attempt on the part of anarcho-syndicalist elements in the labor movement . . . to disrupt the [first] convention by seating delegates who didn't represent anyone but themselves," had led many in the organization to feel that they must be cautious about uniting with others, the report declared. The O. B. U. has therefore held aloof from all other labor organizations —though its bulletin has been known to bestow praise upon certain labor bodies, such as the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America.[8]

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[7] The methods used by the O. B. U. organizer to disrupt the A. T. W. local in Lawrence are characterized as most unscrupulous by the officials of the latter organization. Slanders of various sorts were circulated about these officials in an effort to undermine the confidence of the rank and file in them.

[8] *O. B. U. Bulletin,* Feb. 5, 1921.

The Winnipeg Strike

The general strike which broke out in Winnipeg on May 15, 1919, and lasted till June 26, involving some 35,000 people, did much to give publicity to the O. B. U. movement.[9] Although the strike was called by the orthodox craft unions and the O. B. U. disclaimed all responsibility for it, at least two of the strike leaders were members of the new organization. Propaganda in favor of industrial unionism was widespread during the strike, and during the trial of eight of the strike leaders for seditious conspiracy much was made of the reputed connection between the O. B. U. and the Winnipeg movement. In spite of repeated denials on the part of both radical and conservative labor leaders in Winnipeg, the government maintained that the strike was nothing short of an attempt at revolution. The trouble arose when both the building trades and the metal trades of the city went out on strike, independently, for increased wages and the right of collective bargaining. The Trades and Labour Council then voted to endorse the demands of these unions, and to call for a strike vote of all the affiliated membership as to whether they should go out in sympathy or not. An overwhelming majority of the workers of the city voted to join the strike, and in a short time the whole productive system and most branches of the distributive system were at a standstill. Even the police had voted to go out with the others but the strike committee requested them, as well as the water works employees of the city, to remain on duty. In order that the city might be fed, the strike committee met with the city council and arranged a system whereby bakers, teamsters, and others supplying bread and milk for the

[9] Henceforth the term O. B. U. will refer to the Canadian branch unless otherwise stated.

people might continue at work, protected by special cards bearing the words, "Permitted by Authority of the Strike Committee." [10]

The details of this dramatic general strike cannot be given here but we must note that it was the cry of Bolshevism that finally crushed it, although the strikers emphatically declared that they did not want dictatorship, revolution, or disorder. A citizens' committee of 1,000 fought it vigorously by all possible means and secured the indictment of many of its leaders. R. B. Russell, one of the leading spirits in both the O. B. U. and the Winnipeg strike, was sentenced to jail for two years (though actually released before his term was up), and several other strike leaders were imprisoned. In connection with raising money for the defense of these men, considerable propaganda for O. B. U. principles was spread through the Dominion. The Winnipeg Defense Committee presented to the second O. B. U. convention, held in January, 1920, a resolution asking for a vote on a general strike to secure the release of the Winnipeg strike leaders, in which workers in the British Isles should be asked to cooperate, but the committee to which it was referred reported that while in full sympathy with the spirit of the resolution, it felt that such serious consequences were involved that all other means should be exhausted first. This report was adopted. On July 15, 1919, the Winnipeg Trades Council adopted the constitution of the O. B. U. and requested all unions which were affiliated with the Trades and Labour Congress and the A. F. of L. internationals to withdraw and join the new body. Several unions, chiefly in the railroad shops, did so, and Winnipeg has become the chief stronghold of the O. B. U. The Trades

[10] *The Winnipeg General Sympathetic Strike*, prepared by the Defense Committee, p. 52.

and Labour Congress immediately organized a new council, however, which claimed to represent the majority of the organized workers of the city.

Philosophy and Aim

What is the real spirit and aim of this One Big Union which has roused so much commotion in Canada and spread even to the United States? Its preamble, summing up its general philosophy, is as follows:

Modern industrial society is divided into two classes, those who possess and do not produce and those who produce and do not possess. Alongside this main division all other classifications fade into insignificance. Between these two classes a continual struggle takes place. As with buyers and sellers of any commodity, there exists a struggle on the one hand of the buyer to buy as cheaply as possible, and on the other of the seller to sell for as much as possible, so with the buyers and sellers of labor power. In the struggle over the purchase and sale of labor power the buyers are always masters,—the sellers always workers. From this fact arises the inevitable class struggle.

As industry develops and ownership becomes concentrated more and more into fewer hands; as the control of the economic forces of society become more and more the sole property of imperialistic finance; it becomes apparent that the workers, in order to sell their labor power with any degree of success, must extend their forms of organization in accordance with changing industrial methods. Compelled to organize for self-defence, they are further compelled to educate themselves in preparation for the social change which economic developments will produce whether they seek it or not.

The One Big Union, therefore, seeks to organize the wage workers according to class and class needs; and calls upon all workers to organize irrespective of nationality, sex or craft into a workers' organization, so that they may be enabled to more successfully carry on the everyday fight over wages, hours of work, etc., and prepare themselves for the day when production for profit shall be replaced by production for use.

Tactics

Although it recognizes the inevitable class struggle between those who buy labor and those who sell it, the preamble in comparison with that of the I. W. W. is very mild and innocuous—quite as much so as those of many of the A. F. of L. unions. It looks forward to a social change which will usher in the day when production for profit shall be replaced by production for use, but holds that this social change will be produced by economic developments whether the workers seek it or not. The part of the workers is first to educate themselves in preparation for this change, and second to unite in one organization irrespective of craft, not merely for carrying on the everyday struggle to get better wages and hours, but also to make ready for the future. A bulletin issued by the General Executive Board declares that the O. B. U. "does not advocate overthrowing the government by violence" but "does advocate education of the working class that they may understand government"; "does not preach bloodshed, riot, anarchy or sabotage" but "does contend that only by a change in the present basis of distribution of wealth can rebellion be avoided"; "does not ask for a fair day's pay for a fair day's work" but "does propose that the worker should receive the full product of his toil"; "does not claim that the interests of Capital and Labour are identical," but "does claim that Labour produces all wealth." [11] In a footnote it is explained that the terms "worker" or "labor" refer to "all those who by useful work of hand or brain feed, clothe or shelter, or contribute towards the health, comfort and education of the human race." The organization upholds the principle of the general strike, in which all the workers

[11] *Bulletin No. 1*, issued by the O. B. U. General Executive Board, Vancouver.

of a given territory stand together in support of certain demands, but it also believes in a certain amount of political activity at the same time—in spite of the resolution passed at the Western Labour Conference. The *O. B. U. Bulletin* for December 20, 1919, declared that the only hope for the workers was "in the economic and political solidarity of the working class, one big union and one workers' party." In accordance with this belief, several of the O. B. U. members have run for office on the Labour tickets.

Nevertheless, signs of impatience with political activity occasionally break out in the organization. The *O. B. U. Bulletin* for October 23, 1920, included an article by a contributor on the uselessness of Parliament, which characterized that body as "one more organized hypocrisy." A resolution which gave even more forceful expression to this feeling of impatience was passed by a gathering called together by the O. B. U. of Lawrence, Mass., in April, 1921. It declared that it was useless to ask amnesty for political prisoners as "justice is a joke in the United States" and conditions are as oppressive as those of Russia under the Czar. "We no longer have any faith in your constitutions and laws and courts," the resolution stated. "Let us abandon these everlasting appeals and prepare at once to release the class war prisoners in this country by direct action." [12] This incendiary statement, however, is far from typical of O. B. U. utterances in general.

Structure

The O. B. U. differs from the I. W. W. not only in the methods which it endorses but also in its structure. Whereas the I. W. W. groups the workers according to

[12] *New York Call*, April 19, 1921.

industries and then unites them all in one central organization, the O. B. U. groups them chiefly according to the territories in which they work. In small towns and isolated places where few workers are employed, workers from all industries are organized in a single unit. In larger places, separate units are formed for different industries or occupations, according to the wish of the membership, but all are connected by means of central labour councils to which the units send representatives. These councils have control of the affairs of the O. B. U. in their respective districts, so that when any condition arises which affects the members of more than one unit or is likely to involve them in a strike, the matter is handled by the entire membership through the central labour council. The constitution also provides for district boards "elected from units or camps in a certain industrial region for the purpose of taking care of the internal affairs of their industry." At the close of 1919 there were two such district boards, one for the coal miners and one for the metal miners. The *10th Annual Report of the Canadian Department of Labour,* published early in 1921, states that as no reports had been received from these two boards for the year 1920, it was assumed that they had ceased to function. Of course such evidence is not conclusive, but it is apparent that the boards of coal and metal miners have not been very active of late. No other district boards have been reported.

The Department of Labour reported only five central labour councils in existence at the end of 1920, as no word had been received from three others which had been formed previously. Out of the 50 local units listed in the report, 9 were known as "general workers' units," 1 as a "miscellaneous unit," 1 as a Women's Labour League, 1 as a Finnish workers' unit, and 5 bore simply the names of

the places in which they were organized, whereas 33 belonged to specific industries. Although the preliminary grouping is thus along industrial lines usually, the chief emphasis is upon the territorial rather than the industrial basis of union. It is believed that under many circumstances workers of other industries in the same locality may be of greater assistance to a group on strike than workers of the same industry in other localities. Furthermore the average worker is compelled to change his occupation for the sake of getting a job more often than he changes his location, and hence it is desirable for him to be closely united with other workers in his own town, say the leaders of the O. B. U. Although it is doubtful if these statements are wholly true, except in the case of the unskilled worker, it must be admitted that if an organization is committed to the policy of general sympathetic strikes, the form of grouping which the O. B. U. has adopted is well suited to that end. Workers may be united with other workers of their industry in the same locality, but, except in the case of the apparently non-existent district boards, have no direct connection with units of the same industry in other localities. The I. W. W., on the other hand, unites all branches of an industry throughout the country directly.

Secession of Lumber Workers

At the O. B. U. convention delegates are elected by central labour councils, district boards, or isolated units. In general the representation is on a geographical rather than on an industrial basis, though some attempt is made to choose delegates from different industries where this is possible. Insistence upon this form of representation caused the O. B. U. to lose a large proportion of its membership at the Port Arthur convention in September,

1920. The delegates from the Lumber Workers' Industrial Union insisted that they be seated and allowed to vote as a group representing the lumber workers, not as representing different territorial divisions. This demand was refused and the credentials of three of the ten lumber delegates rejected altogether, whereupon all of the lumber workers withdrew from the convention. Soon afterwards their union, including about 20,000 members, severed all connection with the O. B. U. The lumber workers believed that although it was desirable to link all units in a geographical district, it was also essential to unite all branches of a particular industry, and for that reason they persistently refused to give up the central headquarters of their industry as the O. B. U. demanded. Their withdrawal was a staggering blow from which the O. B. U. has not yet recovered. Its *Bulletin* for February 5, 1921, after mentioning that some groups of lumber workers had split off from the seceding body and returned to the O. B. U., calls the action of the Lumber Workers' Industrial Union the result of a "mass of undigested syndicalist propaganda," and prophesied that it would fail because "an effective working class organization cannot recognize divisions of either craft or industry." On the other hand, many are the prophesies of the failure of the O. B. U. because it does not sufficiently recognize industrial divisions. *The Industrial Union News,* organ of the Workers' International Industrial Union, says: "The O. B. U. seeks to masquerade under the guise of industrial unionism while organized on a territorial plane, without sound foundations and building from the top down." It is a "hodge-podge," somewhat like the Knights of Labor, neither craft nor industrial in structure.[18] The lumber workers seceded from it because they refused to recognize

[18] *Industrial Union News,* Oct. 9, 1920.

the present organization or officials as representative of the principles of industrial unionism, and intended to be separate till that body again conformed to the original platform upon which they had first joined, declares this journal.[14]

Emphasis on Class

It is true that there has been something of a change in the platform of the O. B. U. since it was first organized. The preamble originally adopted declared that the union aimed to "organize the wage worker, not according to craft but according to industry, according to class and class needs," but by referendum vote taken the latter part of 1920 the words "not according to craft but according to industry" were dropped. In a later clause it was made plain that workers must organize irrespective of craft, so it is evident that there was no thought of going back to the craft type of union—though the *Industrial Union News* claims that some of the local units of the O. B. U. are practically only craft bodies. Apparently there has been a growing feeling in the union that industrial lines as well as craft ones should be subordinated completely in order to bring about true class solidarity. An editorial appearing in the *New Textile Worker* for September 25, 1920, declares that the O. B. U., in grouping all trades together in "local or district conglomerations" and then federating them into a "super-conglomeration," loses sight of the ultimate purpose of trade unionism, which is to organize workers that they may carry on production. As production is carried on not by localities but by industries, organization should be primarily on industrial lines.

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[14] *Ibid.*, Feb. 5, 1921.

> The interests of all wage earners coincide in general but . . . organization means intelligent differentiation, means orderly arrangement of parts. . . . Class unionism apart from industrial unionism is a day dream of idealists too impatient to link their hopes with the facts.

Whether the O. B. U. should be considered a type of "class unionism" rather than of industrial unionism is a moot point. As long as the majority of its local units are built on industrial lines, and as long as, theoretically at least, there is the possibility of connecting the different units of an industry by means of district boards, it seems advisable to the writer to include this organization as one of the types of industrial unionism.

Constitutional Provisions

Turning back to the constitutional provisions, we find that all units are expected to refer disputes which they cannot settle through their own grievance committees to their central labour councils or district boards, and these in turn refer them to the General Executive Board, but if any unit wishes to call a strike without the consent of the General Executive it may do so on its own responsibility. Whenever a strike in any district or industry takes place, no member of the O. B. U. may handle directly or indirectly any products of the industry on strike. If the dispute is sufficiently important, a referendum may be taken on the question of a general strike, to be decided by majority vote. Five members of the General Executive Board are elected from the floor of the convention, and one additional member is elected by each central labour council or district board which has 2,000 or more enrolled. According to the *Industrial Union News,* one of the grievances of the Lumber Workers' Industrial Union was that officials were not elected by vote of the entire member-

ship.[15] The original constitution said that the General Executive Board should have representatives of the various industries included in the organization, but it was soon realized that if all were represented the board would be enormous. The convention of January, 1920, decided to elect members from the four leading industries—coal mines, metal mines, lumber work, and railroad transportation—and also four representatives from territorial divisions. The following September the direct representation of industries was given up, however, and only the largest councils and district boards allowed to elect representatives. The General Executive Board elects its own chairman and hires a secretary who is not a member of the board. Any officer may be recalled by a majority vote of the central labour council or district board which elected him. A local unit also may withdraw the credentials of one of its members who has become an official, and if sustained by the central labour council or district board may insist on his recall. There is, however, no provision for the recall of an officer who is sustained by his own council or board, even though he be very distasteful to the rest of the organization. A referendum is held on amendments to the constitution which have been voted on by the convention, but there is no opportunity for changes to be initiated outside of the convention, as there is in some unions.

Attempt to Prevent Centralization

There has been a real attempt to prevent centralization of power in the organization. At the convention held in January, 1920, the secretary-treasurer introduced a resolution providing that the per capita tax of 10 cents a month be paid directly to the General Executive Board

[15] *Industrial Union News*, Feb. 5, 1921.

instead of through the central councils and district boards, but this was voted down on the ground that sometimes a council or district board might need to keep all funds which came from the separate units and not be able to pay any tax to the central organization at all. The newspaper correspondent reporting the meeting said that the "inveterate hatred of the per capita snatcher" became a real menace to the success of organizing plans.[16] In the September convention the secretary-treasurer again complained of the method of financing the organization, saying that the councils and district boards were using the money intended for the General Executive Board for their own purposes, but no change was made. A hot discussion took place in January, 1920, over the question of allowing auditors from the General Executive Board to examine the books of the local units, many objecting to such "centralization" of control. Dissatisfaction with the Dominion Trades and Labour Congress and the A. F. of L., which they considered autocratic and machine-controlled, made the delegates eager to secure a democratic form of organization, even though they failed to take certain steps which they might have taken to put control in the hands of the rank and file—such as election and recall of officials by vote of the entire membership. An attempt to change the phrase "wage-earner" to "member of the working class" in the clause stating that only wage-earners might be seated on the central labour Councils, was defeated for fear that that might be a loophole for the entrance of professional men into what they wished to have purely a proletarian organization. In order to insure that no worker should be kept out of the organization because of poverty, the initiation dues have been set at only $1.

[16] *Manitoba Free Press*, Jan. 29, 1920.

Antagonism with the I. W. W.

As has already been said, there is considerable antagonism between the O. B. U. and the I. W. W. An article by M. Carlson, appearing in *Solidarity,* the I. W. W. paper, on July 10, 1920, stated that labor fakirs had gotten control in the O. B. U., and, seeking to further their own personal ambition, had built up a machine in the organization. Desiring to split up industrial union sentiment into two camps, they had organized the O. B. U. movement in the United States in opposition to the I. W. W. In another column in the same issue the statement was made that the O. B. U. convention, held in Chicago in June, 1920, was only a joke. The Canadian officials had provided for all committees in advance, and the whole convention failed utterly "to accomplish anything toward building up a constructive and representative organization in this country." According to the *Industrial Union News,* the I. W. W. consider the O. B. U. "not red but pale pink," and maintain that it is thus failing to meet the needs of the working class.[17] Due allowance must of course be made, however, for the natural resentment felt towards a competing organization which had usurped a name claimed by the I. W. W. themselves. The attitude of the O. B. U. toward the "anarcho-syndicalist" elements which tried to intrude upon their first convention in the United States has already been mentioned. The Workers' International Industrial Union is also contemptuous of the O. B. U., claiming that it has no higher aim than the craft union which seeks only job control and the closed shop—a policy which is not in the interests of the wage-earners as a whole. Furthermore it is in league with the "reactionary Socialist party of Canada," declares the *Industrial Union News.*[18]

[17] *Industrial Union News,* July 24, 1920.
[18] *Ibid.,* Oct. 9, 1920.

Canadian Government and Craft Union Opposition

On the other hand, the government of Canada takes the stand that O. B. U. is an off-shoot of Soviet Russia which is definitely trying to overthrow the state. A pamphlet issued by the Department of Labour (though probably not prepared by any of the regular members of the Department) in August, 1920, attacks the O. B. U. for its connection with Russia, giving as the chief reason for the charge the fact that the organization had been soliciting funds for the medical relief of that country.[19] This pamphlet has been ridiculed in the liberal press of Canada, which regards it as an attempt to justify the government's action in suppressing the O. B. U. movement. The most prominent leaders in the organization have been imprisoned and all possible means of repression have been used against the movement. The international trade unions affiliated with the Canadian Trades and Labour Congress and the A. F. of L. have fought it vigorously, also. Not only have individuals been expelled and charters of locals revoked for connecting themselves with the O. B. U., but a definite plan of campaign to offset the activities of the new organization has been undertaken by the Trades and Labour Congress with the cooperation of many of the international unions. The strenuous efforts taken to check the spread of the movement indicate that it was flourishing enough for a time to be considered a real danger—even though the total membership of the orthodox trade unions in Canada increased by nearly 59,000 during the year 1919, while the O. B. U. was enrolling its 41,000 members.[20]

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[19] Dept. of Labour, Canada, *Information regarding the Russian Soviet System and Its Propaganda in North America*, August, 1920.

[20] Dept. of Labour, Canada, *9th Annual Report on Labour Organization in Canada*, p. 7.

Relations with United Mine Workers

The United Mine Workers have carried on a particularly vigorous fight against the new organization. In June, 1919, its officials revoked the charter of District 18, including Alberta and British Columbia, which had gone over to the O. B. U. Due to the efforts of the International, a number of locals soon returned to the parent body, but the insurgents formed what was known as District No. 1, Mining Department, O. B. U. The employers in the district then made an agreement with the U. M. W. providing that all men working in and around the mines, who were eligible to membership, should be required to join that body, and agree to have membership dues checked off from their pay. This agreement was confirmed by the director of coal operations, who issued an order to that effect. The O. B. U. members refused to work under such conditions, naturally, and as a result a number of mines were shut down. The organization then appealed to the courts against the enforcement of membership in the U. M. W. and the check-off provision, but their appeal was lost.[21] The O. B. U. thereupon issued a strike order for October 1, which was obeyed in various localities, and did its best to persuade members of the U. M. W. to go out also. The operators and the U. M. W. then joined in securing injunctions against members of the O. B. U., preventing them from interfering with the miners who wanted to work. According to the *O. B. U. Bulletin* for October 23, 1920, thirteen such injunctions were issued on the advice of the U. M. W. The *Bulletin* also declared that the U. M. W. had set apart a million dollars for fighting its rival.

The opinion which the O. B. U. holds of the U. M. W.

[21] *Ibid., 10th Annual Report on Labour Organization in Canada*, p. 25.

is expressed in the following sentence: "Officials of the U. M. W. of A. are the same bunch of crooks who have so often betrayed the miners of the U. S. in their struggles and strikes at the instance of their government and the owners." [22] Extreme resentment was felt against the older organization for invoking the aid of both employers and the "ruthless capitalist government" in their struggle for control. With such allies it was inevitable that the U. M. W. should win. It is significant that at a convention of District 18 held in Calgary in June, 1921, the charter of the district as an autonomous part of the U. M. W., which had been taken away two years before, was restored. This is a good illustration of the decline of the O. B. U. in that region.

Decline in Membership

The various attacks upon the O. B. U. have not failed to have their effect upon the whole organization. During 1919, 41,394 membership cards were issued, and from January to August, 1920, there were 30,212.[23] The receipts from per capita tax during the months from January to August indicate an average paid-up membership of only about 16,000, however. The per capita tax records do not give an accurate account of the actual membership, for, as has already been said, the Central councils and district boards were very lax in turning over to the general office the tax money which had been paid by the local units, but they indicate something of the resources upon which the organization could depend. The Department of Labour reports that at the end of 1920 a fair estimate of the membership of the O. B. U. would be

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[22] *O. B. U. Bulletin,* Dec. 18, 1920.

[23] Dept. of Labour, Canada, 10*th Annual Report on Labour Organization in Canada,* p. 31.

only 5,000, as against 41,150 at the end of 1919.[24] Mr. R. A. Rigg, of the Employment Service of Canada, who has been active in the Trades and Labour Congress, considers that a decidedly generous estimate. Of the 101 local units, 66 had passed out of existence, 2 were known to have left the organization, and 15 new ones had been formed, leaving a total of 50, according to the Department of Labour report. On the other hand, the *O. B. U. Bulletin* for January 22, 1921, boasts of a membership of 80,000. It admits the loss of some coal miners, due to the interference of government, and also the loss of certain sections of lumber workers, but criticizes the press for announcing the death of the O. B. U. "so frequently and so prematurely." "If the O. B. U. was not a live organization growing steadily in membership," it would not be necessary for the papers to keep heralding its demise. The Department of Labour had based its estimate partly on the fact that only 3,377 votes were cast in the referendum held late in 1920. This vote the *Bulletin* declares meant nothing as many were absent from the meetings where the vote was taken, and several units did not vote at all. The O. B. U. has "emerged from the ordeal [of persecution] with redoubled strength," says the *Bulletin* of January 8, 1921, and the many attacks upon the organization have only served to alienate the rank and file from their loyalty to the old international unions. With these conflicting statements it is impossible to tell what the actual membership of the O. B. U. is at the present time. The claim of the *Bulletin* is undoubtedly exaggerated; but on the other hand the estimate of the Department of Labour may be too small. At any rate it seems evident that the organization has not continued to flourish in the manner confidently predicted by its founders.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 36.

Comparison with the I. W. W.

The comparative failure of the organization is no doubt due largely to its structure. In neglecting to give adequate recognition to the ties binding workers of the same industry together and in seeking to rely instead on the general feeling of solidarity in the working class, the O. B. U., like the Knights of Labor, has failed to understand the psychology of those it has sought to win and hold. If it is difficult to make skilled and unskilled workers in the same industry realize their community of interest, it is doubly difficult to make those in different industries feel a strong bond of union. The I. W. W. has faced this fact and, unlike the O. B. U., seeks to unite all who work in an industry in one international union having a large measure of control over its own affairs. Although it preaches the brotherhood of all workers as ardently as does the O. B. U., it recognizes that each industry has its own particular problems which can best be solved by the workers in that industry, and considers that loyalty to one industrial union need in no way impair loyalty to the I. W. W. or to the working class as a whole. If the O. B. U. had adopted the same course it would not have lost the strongest group which had affiliated with it.

Although the O. B. U. is committed to the policy of the general strike, its spirit is somewhat less militant than that of the I. W. W. It expects the change in the social order, which will put production for use in place of production for profit, to be brought about by economic developments whether the workers seek it or not, whereas the I. W. W. definitely emphasizes the need of action in order to "take possession of the earth and the instruments of production." The O. B. U. condemns all use of sabotage and violence to hasten the coming of the new

day, and in so doing is in harmony with the more moderate wing in the I. W. W. Its interest in politics, however, is quite lacking in the I. W. W. Both organizations look forward to the day when the workers shall own and manage industry, but the structure of the O. B. U., because of its blurring of industrial lines, is less well adapted than that of the older body for such management.

PART III

INDEPENDENT INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM

CHAPTER VII

INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM IN THE GARMENT INDUSTRY

1. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America

Importance of the Union

Besides the A. F. of L. unions already mentioned, and the all-inclusive organizations such as the I. W. W. and the O. B. U., there are many industrial unions which are independent of affiliation with any of these bodies. Most important of these is the powerful union in the men's clothing industry, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America. There are organizations with an industrial structure in other branches of the garment industry which belong to the A. F. of L., and these will be considered briefly in this chapter in connection with the new Needle Trades Workers' Alliance, in which four of these unions are affiliated with the Amalgamated Clothing Workers; but chief emphasis will be placed upon the latter organization, which furnishes perhaps the most interesting example which we have of the principles of constructive industrial unionism.

Characteristics of the Garment Industry

The general characteristics of the garment industry are such that the problem of building up a strong labor organization within it has been very great. The system which was universal in former years and which still persists in New York and many of the smaller centers is one of

"sub-contracting," where the "manufacturer" is chiefly engaged in the disposal of the product and turns over the greater part of the work of actual production to contractors who hire their own workers and have sole responsibility for them. The small amount of capital necessary for starting a clothing shop results in a large number of transient firms. Any cutter who has ambition may set up a contracting business, rent a loft and machines, buy materials on credit, and often meet his expenses out of the first year's profit. Hundreds of firms are thus starting—and failing—every year. The bitter competition among contractors, most of whom have risen from the ranks of the workers, and the system of playing one against another, tend to lower the price paid by the manufacturer for work done, and hence the wages which the contractor can pay the workers. The evils of sweating—the extremely low wages, long hours, and unsanitary conditions—resulting from this system are too well known to need extended comment. The seasonal nature of the industry is intensified by the fact that so little capital is laid up in a plant that it costs little to keep it idle, and hence there is small incentive for the manufacturer to try and regulate his work so as to prevent the long periods of unemployment which are characteristic of the trade. Attempts to organize the workers in the industry were greatly hindered by the fact that when a strike occurred in one shop, the manufacturer could easily transfer his work to that of another contractor, or the contractor could reorganize with a new set of workers a few blocks away. The shifting personnel resulting from the frequent shutting down of shops, the small amount of skill required for much of the work, and the presence of a large number of women in the industry, have also made the work of building up an effective union in the industry very difficult.

Origin of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers

After various unsuccessful attempts to form a stable union, the United Garment Workers was organized in the men's clothing industry in 1891, and immediately affiliated with the A. F. of L. As the differences in skill required for the various processes were decreasing, the industrial form of organization seemed more natural than the craft form, so the new union was theoretically formed on an industrial basis, being open to all who worked upon men's clothing. The craft spirit of the skilled workers was emphasized, however, and little attempt was made to bring in the less skilled workers or to form a truly democratic organization. At the beginning various Socialist resolutions were passed by the United Garment Workers, but before long its officers with the support of a conservative element in the organization began a fight against all radical tendencies, and the union has maintained a conservative attitude ever since. The power of its officials was increased by their control of the union label, which their opponents claimed they used for their own interests rather than for the welfare of the rank and file.

Dissatisfaction with the autocratic methods of these officials, and their apparent indifference to the desires of the membership, caused increasing restlessness which came to a head at the convention of 1914. At this convention many delegates from the large cities were excluded on the charge that their locals had not paid bills which had been sent them by the central organization. These delegates and their supporters declared that these bills were unjust, and that they had been sent at the last moment simply as a pretext for disfranchising the locals which were opposed to the existing administration. The appointment of Nashville, which was far removed from the large clothing centers, as the convention city they considered as another

attempt to prevent dissatisfied delegates from those centers from attending. As a result of the action taken by the officials of the United Garment Workers, 110 delegates representing 54 locals withdrew and held an insurgent convention of their own, claiming to represent a majority of the membership and hence to be the true U. G. W. Sidney Hillman was elected president, and Joseph Schlossberg secretary-treasurer. Delegates were sent to the A. F. of L. convention to present the case of the insurgents, but were refused a hearing on the ground that their newly elected officials were unknown to that body and that it was an established principle with the Federation never to recognize seceders. Since that time the A. F. of L. has fought the new body of garment workers bitterly, although the other needle unions have done their best to end the quarrel. In December, 1914, the insurgents decided to form a new organization under the name of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, with a new democratic constitution. The United Garment Workers was left with few members except the makers of overalls, who were mostly in small locals in scattered towns. It has a few locals among shirt and raincoat makers and custom tailors, but has actual control only in the overall trade. Its membership in 1921 was only 47,200.

Rapid Growth in Power

The A. C. W., on the other hand, has grown by leaps and bounds. Whereas the United Garment Workers had made little effort to organize any but the skilled cutters in the men's clothing industry, the new union from the beginning sought to include everyone engaged in making garments for men and boys. In spite of the bitter opposition of the A. F. of L., which has attacked it at every opportunity, and done its best to break its strikes and prevent its making agreements with employers, the A. C. W. has

attained a 100 per cent organization in several of the large clothing centers, and claims to include over 95 per cent of all the workers in its field.[1] Its membership in 1920 was 177,000, distributed in 145 locals in 40 different cities.[2] A vigorous campaign against the long hours and extremely low wages which had always been characteristic of the industry was instituted as soon as the union was formed, and by the end of 1919, after a series of hard struggles, the hours of the clothing workers had been decreased to forty-four a week throughout all the important clothing centers, and their wages increased by a higher percentage than those of almost all other occupations.[3] Before the advent of the A. C. W. many women in the industry received only $5 a week and many men less than $10, while only 15 per cent earned over $20 a week. Five years later, more than 85 per cent of the workers earned over $20, and many as much as $50 a week.[4] An instance of their improved financial condition is found in the fact that the A. C. W. sent a check for $100,000 to help the striking steel workers in 1919. According to Secretary Schlossberg, this was "the greatest single financial contribution to the class struggle of all times and in any part of the world," and a remarkable instance of labor solidarity considering the fact that the strike was under the auspices of the A. F. of L. which had always fought the A. C. W. so vigorously.[5]

Reasons for Rapid Success

Many reasons have been given for the rapid success of the organization. When asked how the clothing workers

[1] Research and Publication Dept. of the A. C. W., *Summary of the Clothing Workers' Lockout Situation*, Dec. 17, 1920.
[2] *Report of the Executive Board of the A. C. W.*, 1920, p. 174.
[3] *Ibid.*, Appendix, p. 34.
[4] *Ibid.*, Appendix, p. 28.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 221.

had accomplished so much in such a short time, Schlossberg replied: "It was through our idealism. We had nothing but that to offer the people in the beginning." [6] The ideal which the union held before the workers was one of a cooperative society in which production should be carried on for the service of the whole community rather than for the profit of a few. Ultimate emancipation from the capitalist system, the evils of which were all too apparent in the clothing trade, and workers' control of industry were what the new organization promised. This hope for the future combined with democratic management of the union in the present, undoubtedly had much to do with the growth of the new body. The union was fortunate in the leaders whom it chose when it first broke away from the United Garment Workers and whom it has retained ever since, and their broad statesmanship and high idealism, reinforced by the intelligent cooperation of the rank and file, have done a great deal to make the organization what it is. On the other hand, there were certain external factors which were perhaps equally important in the upbuilding of the union. The stoppage of immigration during the war and the general labor shortage made control of the labor supply much easier than it otherwise would have been, and the government policy of dealing with trade unions served to stimulate the organization movement among the clothing workers as well as among many others.

Philosophy of the Union

The A. C. W., as has been said, holds that the old form of unionism which is content merely to wring a few concessions from the employing class without seeking any

[6] *Nation*, May 22, 1920, "The A. C. W. in Session," by Mary Heaton Vorse.

radical change in the control of industry is wholly inadequate, and declares that the workers must organize in such a way as to gain control of the system of production and use it for the benefit of the working class and of society as a whole. The preamble which the organization has adopted reads as follows:

The economic organization of Labor has been called into existence by the capitalist system of production, under which the division between the ruling class and the ruled class is based upon the ownership of the means of production. The class owning those means is the one that is ruling, the class that possesses nothing but its labor power, which is always on the market as a commodity, is the one that is being ruled.

A constant and unceasing struggle is being waged between these two classes.

In this struggle the economic organization of Labor, the union, is a natural weapon of offense and defense in the hands of the working class.

But in order to be efficient, and effectively serve its purpose, the union must in its structure correspond to the prevailing system of the organization of industry.

Modern industrial methods are very rapidly wiping out the old craft demarcations, and the resultant conditions dictate the organization of Labor along industrial lines.

This history of the Class Struggle in this country for the past two decades amply testifies to the ineffectiveness of the form, methods and spirit of craft unionism. It also shows how dearly the working class has paid for its failure to keep apace with industrial development.

The working class must accept the principles of Industrial Unionism or it is doomed to impotence.

The same forces that have been making for Industrial Unionism are likewise making for a closer inter-industrial alliance of the working class.

The industrial and inter-industrial organization, built upon the solid rock of clear knowledge and class consciousness, will put the organized working class in actual control of the system of production, and the working class will then be ready to take possession of it.

The theory of the class struggle and of irresistible forces making for an industrial and inter-industrial organization of the workers which will ultimately take over the control of industry, are here clearly set forth, but the uncompromising militancy of the I. W. W. preamble is lacking. The preamble of the A. C. W. has been made an excuse for many attacks upon the organization as a Bolshevist institution by hostile employers and by the radical-hunting Lusk Committee, but officials of the union interpret it as implying no intention of taking over industry by force or any other unlawful means. The clothing workers hope ultimately to be able to manufacture clothing on a cooperative basis, and to be free to direct their own work, but they have no immediate purpose of overturning the existing industrial order.[7] The real radicalism of the union, Secretary Schlossberg declares, lies not in its preamble or in any other such statement of principles, but in the steady work which it is doing in establishing industrial democracy in center after center of the clothing industry, and in training the workers for industrial responsibility in the future.

The Socialistic outlook of the A. C. W. is due partly to the presence of many Russian Jews who came to this country with radical ideas, which were fostered by contact with Socialists here. Multitudes of the Jews who belong to the union came to America embued with the spirit of competitive individualism rather than of Socialism, however, and became radical merely through the pressure of the economic and social conditions which they found here. The other national groups in the industry—the Italians, Poles, Slovenians, Finns, Lithuanians, etc.—in spite of their varying traditions have accepted the same

[7] *New York Call,* Jan. 10, 1921, "Hillman Smashes Lies with Real A. C. W. Story."

ideas when subjected to the same industrial conditions, so the philosophy of the clothing workers cannot be attributed to their race as much as to the characteristics of their industry.[8] According to Budish and Soule:

> The large number of small and transitory firms, the keen competition among them on the one hand and among the workers on the other, and the highly-seasonal character of the industry, made all conditions so unstable and fluctuating that it seemed impossible for most of the workers to hope for material improvement without abolishing the capitalist régime.[9]

Only the common aspiration for a new social order could have held them together and built up an organization powerful enough to secure the immediate material improvements that had before seemed so hopeless.

Spirit of Citizenship

The cry of un-Americanism is occasionally raised against the union because of its large percentage of foreign-born—although at least three-quarters of the members are American citizens, according to President Hillman—and because of its radical theories. This cry is particularly resented by the clothing workers, who ask if they were more truly American when they were unable to take proper care of their children and had to send them to a factory to grow up in ignorance, than today "when we are helping to make Young America fit to govern this country in the next generation" by sending them to school properly cared for.[10] There is a real spirit of citizenship within the organization, and a firm belief, based on practical experience, that the immigrant can become as good an American as any other.

[8] Budish and Soule, *The New Unionism*, p. 65.

[9] Budish and Soule, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

[10] *Introduction to the Documentary History of the A. C. W.*, 1914-16, Appendix, p. 22.

Types of Workers in the Union

The A. C. W. aims to include all those who make clothing for men and boys, regardless of skill, but it does not try to take in all the various engineers, firemen, mechanics, clerks, and teamdrivers employed in and around the clothing factories and shops. A resolution introduced at its first convention in December, 1914, providing for the inclusion of such workers was voted down on the ground that it would entail needless jurisdictional disputes. Since then the union has begun to organize teamsters and shipping clerks connected with the industry to some extent, but for the most part the members of the organization are those actually engaged in making garments. A fully developed industrial union would include not only all the workers in the men's and boys' garment industry, but also those in the ladies' garment trade and the other needle trades. A step in that direction was taken in December, 1920, when a federation of the different needle unions was formed. This federation will be described later in the chapter.

Structure of the Union

No barriers to membership in the form of high initiation fees are raised in the A. C. W., as the fee must be less than $10, and some locals admit members for considerably less than that. The composition of the locals varies. As a rule they are made up of workers of a single craft—cutters, pressers, tailors, etc. Sometimes, however, they include all workers of a certain nationality in the district regardless of craft; and in some of the smaller towns or distinct sections of large cities the tendency is to make them include all garment workers in the locality. The locals are merely subdivisions for administrative purposes, however, and the real power over strikes and agreements

rests with the joint boards which are made up of representatives of the different locals of a city or trade unit. The joint board carries on negotiations with the employers in regard to grievances arising under existing agreements, draws up and presents new demands, though usually with the advice of the general office, and decides upon the calling of strikes. In case of a general strike of the trade, however, the sanction of the General Executive Board is necessary. Each joint board has a general manager who conducts routine business, endeavors to settle disputes between workers, etc.; trade managers to look after the interests of the different portions of the trade; and numerous business agents to deal with individual employers.

The shop is the smallest unit in the organization. Each shop has an unpaid chairman elected by all the workers in it, irrespective of craft, and a shop committee which assists him. In very big shops, separate crafts may have sub-chairmen of their own who serve on the shop committee. This committee settles disputes in the shop, if possible, but the members have the right of appeal to the executive board of the local and through it to the joint board. The shop chairmen serve as channels of information between the joint board and the rank and file, and perform an invaluable service in stirring up sentiment in favor of projects inaugurated by the joint board, and in interpreting the wishes of the membership to the central organizations. Coming constantly in close touch with the workers, they do much to make the union a truly democratic and wide-awake body.

Democratic Spirit

The organization prides itself on its democratic spirit and the extent to which the rank and file of the member-

ship controls its policy and feels responsible for its success. In this respect it is in marked contrast to the older type of union in which the members are for the most part content to let their officials formulate policies as long as they produce results. The main difference between the old and the new unionism, according to Budish and Soule, lies not in their structure but in their philosophy and attitude.[11] The methods of electing officers are not different from those of many other unions, but there is a difference in the attitude of the rank and file toward the leaders, and of the leaders toward the rank and file. Without the alert and intelligent interest of the members and their conviction that the officials exist only to carry out their will, the union would be very different from what it is. The power of Sidney Hillman and Joseph Schlossberg is more a "spiritual guidance" than it is authoritative control. Quickly responsive to the currents of feeling within their organization, and encouraging the frankest kind of discussion of their actions, they nevertheless through the force of their own personalities have an influence over the minds of their members that cannot be measured. In fact this influence is so great that the I. W. W. criticize the clothing workers for being wholly under their domination, and deplore the overwhelming defeat of a resolution forbidding any officer to serve for more than six consecutive years which was introduced at the 1920 convention of the A. C. W.[12] The nomination of Hillman for president at this convention was enthusiastically unanimous, although there had just been sharp and almost acrimonious debate over a proposition which he vigorously supported, and many criticisms of his point of view.

[11] Budish and Soule, *op. cit.*, p. 171.
[12] *Solidarity*, June 5, 1920.

The general officers are elected by referendum vote, after being nominated by the convention. All other vital questions are submitted also to a referendum of the general membership, after consideration by the convention or by the General Executive Board. Another method of finding out the will of the rank and file is by mass meetings arranged simultaneously in different places to consider important issues before the organization or a portion of it. By these meetings practically the entire membership can be reached at once and given an opportunity for discussion. They probably do more than anything else to keep the rank and file alert and intelligent about the affairs of the union.

Joint Agreements

Unlike the I. W. W., the A. C. W. believes strongly in the value of collective agreements with employers and has developed most interesting and elaborate machinery for the peaceful settlement of difficulties which may arise. The first agreement of the sort in the men's clothing industry was worked out in the shops of Hart, Schaffner and Marx in Chicago in 1911, three years before the forming of the A. C. W., and this agreement with certain modifications has formed the basis of the numerous ones that have been drawn up by the A. C. W. Both Hillman and Schlossberg worked under the original Hart, Schaffner and Marx agreement and were anxious to develop the same system elsewhere. The essential feature of the agreements which have now been established in all the big clothing markets of America—New York, Chicago, Rochester, Baltimore, Boston, Cleveland, Montreal, and Toronto—are similar, though there are some variations. They provide for a trade board composed of an equal number of representatives of the union and of the associa-

tion of manufacturers, presided over by an "impartial chairman," whose salary is paid jointly by the two sides. If the shop chairman or other union representative is unable to settle a grievance arising under the agreement by consultation with the shop superintendent or labor manager employed by a firm (or group of firms), the joint board of the union and the board of labor managers present the two sides of the case to the trade board for its decision. The impartial chairman acts as a mediator between the two sides, trying to get them to compromise and reach a settlement.

In some centers there is also an arbitration board composed of one representative of each side and the impartial chairman, to which the case may be referred if necessary. The chairman seldom makes the final decision himself, but in case of a deadlock he is obliged to do so. He is limited in his decision by the terms of the original agreement, however, and cannot make rulings which involve a radical departure from the standards already established. The arbitration board is expected to deal with questions of principle and the application of the agreement to new issues as they arise, and may make changes in wages or hours if there is a decided change in conditions in the industry. This arrangement provides for considerable flexibility and makes a break between the two sides less likely than a rigid system which takes no heed of changing conditions. Radicals of the I. W. W. type criticize the union for its policy of making contracts with employers, but the kind of contract which it makes is free from the usual objections that are brought against time agreements, as wages and other conditions may be changed under it at any time, and one group of workers is never forced by it to "scab" against another group which is on strike. In markets where piece-work prevails, a joint rate committee

is appointed to fix the rates of payment. The trade board or the impartial chairman may review all cases of discharge, and reinstate the dismissed employee if injustice seems to have been done.

Some agreements provide for the closed shop and others for the preferential shop, in which preference must be given to members of the union when additional workers are needed or when the working force must be reduced. It is understood that the door of the union shall be kept open for the reception of all workers who seek admission, and if unreasonable barriers are raised the joint tribunal has power to remedy the matter. In some cases a definite time limit is set for the life of the agreement; in others it runs on indefinitely, though either side may withdraw after due notice. "Stoppages" of work are forbidden—though sometimes they occur in spite of the efforts of the union to prevent them. In such cases those guilty are reported to the trade board for discipline. In New York the union has endeavored to bring about some regulation of the contract system which has made conditions especially chaotic in that city, and has insisted that the manufacturer make fair terms with the contractors and then stand by them, instead of fostering cut-throat competition between them by shifting constantly from one to another. The present New York agreement provides for a joint commission to work out the relations between the union, the manufacturers, and the contractors.

The Spirit of the Agreements

The spirit in which the agreements have been made is well expressed by the following paragraph in the preamble to the Hart, Schaffner and Marx agreement of 1916:

> The parties to this pact realize that the interests sought to be reconciled herein will tend to pull apart, but they enter it in

faith that by the exercise of the cooperative and constructive spirit it will be possible to bring and keep them together. This will involve as an indispensable prerequisite the total suppression of the militant spirit by both parties and the development of reason instead of force as the rule of action.

Although endorsing the theory of the class struggle, the union does not interpret it as an "everyday petty fight in the shop," to use the words of Sidney Hillman in replying to a radical critic at the last convention. By eliminating minor sources of friction the strength of the union is conserved for larger issues, and it is enabled to blaze out new trails in the direction of workers' control of industry. We have the "double mission of securing for ourselves democracy in industry while keeping the wheels of industry in uninterrupted motion," says the report of the Executive Board for 1920.[18]

Present relations are not final. There will be further changes until the workers' hope of emancipation from the wage status is realized. Those changes may be opposed and forced into undesirable channels, or they may be allowed to flow naturally and freely along the path of peace, but they cannot be checked. Nor can they be prematurely forced into ripeness. The guiding of this development along the road of modern civilization is the immediate task of the industrial organization of the workers.

The A. C. W. has accomplished in the few years of its existence more in the way of civilizing industry and abolishing the "law of the jungle" in settling disputes than any other union in the country, perhaps, and it is recognized as the sole check which has yet been brought to bear upon the anarchic conditions resulting from the fierce competition between contractors in the New York market. During the war, when employers were bidding against each other to secure labor and offering wages far above those

[18] *Report of the Executive Board of the A. C. W.*, 1920, p. 224.

which their agreements called for, the union forbade its members to accept payment which was higher than that provided for in their agreements, and actually forced some members to return to jobs paying $5 and $10 a week less than other employers had offered them.[14] The union's effort to stabilize the industry by preventing shifting from one job to another for the sake of higher pay was not wholly successful, due largely to the lack of cooperation on the part of employers; but it is significant that it was the union which stood for order in industry while multitudes of employers were fostering chaotic conditions by their disregard of agreements.

Attitude of Employers

The first step toward joint control of the industry on a national scale was made when the National Industrial Federation of Clothing Manufacturers was formed in July, 1919, by employers' associations in New York, Chicago, Baltimore, and Rochester, in order to negotiate uniform agreements with the A. C. W. The following September a joint council was formed by representatives of the Federation and the Amalgamated in order to work out standards for the industry and establish widespread collective bargaining. Up to this time the council has not been particularly active, but there are great possibilities in it for industrial democracy on a large scale. Much testimony has come from employers in Chicago, Rochester, Baltimore, and other centers as to the success and value of the contracts which they have made with the Amalgamated.

The growing power of the union has roused consternation in the minds of some manufacturers, however, and during the last two or three years there have been several attempts to smash the organization. One of these was at

[14] Report of Impartial Chairman, Dr. Leiserson, *Advance*, Jan. 28, 1921.

Rochester, where Michaels, Stern and Company, one of the important clothing firms, refused to join in the agreement with the A. C. W. that nineteen other employers had made, and precipitated a strike by discharging members of the union. A campaign against the Amalgamated as a Bolshevist organization was at once started in the public press, and in September, 1919, a sweeping injunction against the strikers forbidding even peaceful picketing and paying of strike benefits was secured. This injunction was later made permanent, and damages amounting to $100,000 were assessed upon the union, on the ground that it was trying to establish a monopoly of labor and coerce others by the mere force of its numbers. This verdict was immediately appealed. Meanwhile the collective agreement with the other Rochester firms has been working smoothly and successfully. One of the incidents of this strike was that Michaels, Stern and Company employed members of the United Garment Workers as strike-breakers and even entered into an agreement with that body, though it had always fought it bitterly before. In this instance, as in many others, the A. F. of L. clothing union joined the employer in attacking the Amalgamated. In Boston the Clothiers' Association broke off relations with the union in December, 1920, and tried its best to split off the cutters and trimmers from the other workers by promising them good wages if they would leave such an un-American organization as the Amalgamated. This the cutters and trimmers indignantly refused to do, and the manufacturers eventually surrendered.

Recent Conflict in New York

The details of most of these struggles cannot be given here, but the one in New York was so important that it must be given particular attention. It began in the fall

of 1920, when the Manufacturers' Association sent an ultimatum to the union saying that unless it agreed to seven demands, chief of which were the adoption of piece-work instead of the week-work which had prevailed in the market for many years, reduction of wages, and the right of employers to discharge any worker falling below a standard of production set by the employers, the Association would disregard the union and put its own program into effect. The union had already urged that a joint investigation be made of the decreased production and other conditions complained of by the employers, and that standards of production be set by a joint committee representing both sides, agreeing to secure enforcement of whatever standards were thus established, but this proposition was rejected by the employers. The employers offered, however, to submit their demands to the arbitration of the impartial chairman, but the chairman refused to arbitrate on the ground that they involved making an entirely new agreement and should not be settled by anyone outside of the industry.

Dr. Leiserson, the impartial chairman, in his report to the public on the New York lockout, stated that in the beginning the Manufacturers' Association did not contemplate breaking off relations with the union but merely a reduction in labor cost, but before negotiations were completed a new element got control of the Association and resolved to abolish the whole system of collective bargaining.[15] Against the real desires of a large part of the Association, according to Dr. Leiserson, the unanimous refusal of the union to accept the ultimatum was followed by the immediate breaking off of all relations by the manufacturers, and the dismissal of the impartial chairman,

[15] *Advance*, Jan. 28, 1921.

early in December. The entire staff of labor managers employed by the clothing firms to negotiate with the union had been forced to resign just previous to this. The National Federation of Clothing Manufacturers refused to uphold the New York Association in its stand and rebuked it for taking such action against the union without consulting the Federation, but its censure had no effect. A "lockout" of the members of the A. C. W. was at once instituted and soon involved some 60,000 men and women.

Important Phases of the Struggle

Certain individual employers settled with the union before long, but it was six months before the mass of the workers returned to the shops under a new agreement signed by the Clothing Manufacturers' Association. During this time a good example of solidarity was furnished by the loyal support given to the New York workers by Amalgamated members in other centers, who raised nearly $2,000,000 for their defense, and by the other needle unions who at once rallied to the side of the A. C. W. In Philadelphia the clothing workers went on strike against contractors who tried to do work for New York manufacturers, and soon put a stop to such attempts. A few days after the New York "lockout" began, the manufacturers announced new demands in addition to the previous ones, including:

1. Renunciation of "sovietism."
2. Abolition of the office of impartial chairman.
3. Abolition of the walking delegate.
4. Abolition of the rule prohibiting changing from one contractor to another.

As the lockout, or strike as the employers called it, progressed, one manufacturer after another followed the example of Michaels, Stern and Company and brought

suit against the union, till the amount charged against it totaled over $2,000,000. On the other hand, the A. C. W. surprised its opponents by bringing a counter-suit for $1,000,000 against the Manufacturers' Association for conspiring to prevent the union from functioning. One firm brought suit demanding the dissolution of the union on the ground of its being an unlawful organization formed to commit acts injurious to the public welfare, and another sought an injunction providing for the same thing, but both of these were denied. As in the Rochester case, great emphasis was placed in these attacks on the radical preamble of the union. Among the reasons given by Judge Bijur for dismissing the suit for dissolution of the union, which included also a demand for $500,000 damages, was his opinion that the words of the preamble were quite innocuous and gave no evidence of unlawful intent. Although the plaintiff at once started a new action, this decision was heralded as a great victory for the union.

After the new agreement was signed in June, most of these suits against the Amalgamated and the counter-suit against the manufacturers were dropped, though a few irreconcilables continued to press their claims. The clothing workers went back to work under what President Hillman declared was the most constructive agreement ever entered into by the New York clothing market. Although it allowed a 15 per cent decrease in wages, it maintained the other gains which had previously been secured, restored the office of impartial chairman, and provided for joint determination of both wages and standards of production. A few weeks later the arbitration machinery enacted rules for the introduction of improved machinery in the shops, which provided for a joint committee to determine the number of machines to be installed and the conditions necessary to protect the health and welfare of the workers.

Attitude toward Efficiency

The attitude of the Amalgamated toward efficiency in the industry is particularly significant. At the last convention in May, 1920, the union definitely accepted responsibility for production, and resolved to fix standards of output in order that efficiency might be increased. Declaring that the piece-work system which prevailed in many markets was injurious to the health of the workers, it announced its willingness to prevent the slackness often connected with week-work by maintaining reasonable standards of production.[16] The debate on the proposition when it was presented to the convention was vehement. Many delegates spoke against the setting of production standards for fear it would result in a return to the old slavery of the sweat-shop task system. Hillman, Schlossberg, and others vigorously urged the adoption of such standards, however, and won a decided victory over the opposition. The system which had already been put in operation in the shop of the Sonnenberg Company in Baltimore, whereby standards of production for different grades of workers were arrived at by a committee of workers and employers, was enthusiastically upheld.

According to this system, several wage groups according to different degrees of output are established, and any worker who is falling behind the standard set for his group is warned by the shop chairman, and if necessary properly instructed. If he does not improve the union will not interfere with his discipline. William Hard in an article in the *New Republic* for June 2, 1920, sums up in his own words something of Hillman's argument for

[16] That the Union has not always succeeded in doing this is indicated by the decision of the impartial chairman in Rochester in May, 1921, restoring piece-work on many processes, in order to increase production and thus reduce labor cost without cutting wages. Nevertheless there has been a real attempt on the part of the organization to maintain efficiency under the week work system.

establishing standards of production, and a few sentences from his summary are worth quoting:

> The inefficiencies and the wastes of production today give us a law of the jungle in industry. It is for the union to be an influence toward bringing in a reign of real law and order in industry. The industry must maintain and safeguard the worker. The worker must maintain and safeguard the industry. We expect that Labor will come into its own in industry. We cannot wreck the house in which we expect to live. . . . We have to rise now above the morale of the system about us. We have to be for production. The morale of business about us would teach us to give as little as possible of our commodity in return for as much as we can get. We must rise above that morale. This decision which we are now about to make is a decision of the very life of the Amalgamated and of its future.

It is this assumption of responsibility for the well-being of the industry that is the distinguishing thing about the "new unionism" as exemplified in the Amalgamated. It is as far as possible removed from the "conscientious withdrawal of efficiency" practiced by many conservative unions as well as by the I. W. W., and is an expression of the union's belief that the workers must be trained in industrial responsibility before they can assume management of industry. This far-sighted realization that the success of the industry is as much the concern of the workers as of the manufacturers, marks the Amalgamated as perhaps the most progressive labor organization in the country today.

Attitude toward Unemployment

The assumption of responsibility for output is not the only respect in which the A. C. W. is showing a broad and statesmanlike attitude toward the problems of the industry. It is in many respects pressing forward toward the setting of standards which are different in quality as

well as in quantity from those established before. Declaring repeatedly that "the industry is ours because our lives are in it," the clothing workers are interested in everything that has to do with the industry. The problem of unemployment is one on which they have been spending much thought in the last year or two. The Executive Board in its report for 1920 stated that the campaign for the forty-four hour week was not merely for the prevention of fatigue and the securing of leisure for recreation and education, but also for relieving the unemployment situation. The union felt that by shortening the working time it could help provide for its members who were returning from the war and who could otherwise not be reabsorbed into the industry. For some time the organization has maintained the principle that in slack periods the work should as far as possible be divided equally among all the workers. A more far-reaching solution, however, was the one endorsed by the last convention, which put the responsibility for unemployment squarely upon the industry.

Unemployment in the clothing trade is due primarily to inefficiency of management, the union declares. Continuity of work is not impossible in the industry, for it has been accomplished in certain large plants, by working on conservative styles in the dull season and other methods of distributing production evenly throughout the year. As the present method of working a large number of people feverishly for a few months and then laying most of them off during the slack season is unintelligent and unnecessary, the managers of the industry should bear the burden of it by providing a continuous livelihood for all their workers. An unemployment fund to care for those who are out of work must be created by the manufacturers, without assistance from any other group, as a

matter of justice rather than of charity. Only when employers are thus penalized for their own inefficiency of management will they vigorously set to work to abolish unemployment. "We as labor," declares Hillman, "take the position that unemployment should not be classed as one of the things we have to accept. It is in the same class as the sweat shop, which we have demonstrated to have no inherent place in the industry. My conviction is that there can be no real efficiency in the clothing industry until the unemployment problem is dealt with properly." [17] The 1920 convention definitely adopted this principle of the unemployment fund and voted to work for its establishment.

Interest in the Cooperative Movement

Another important decision of the last convention was to enter actively into the cooperative movement. The first step in this direction was to be the founding of a cooperative bank in which the average workman could invest and feel that his money would not be used against the interests of the labor movement in any way. On this question, as on that of production standards, the debate was quite intense. The radicals feared that the cooperative movement was too "bourgeois" and the Amalgamated would become conservative if it engaged in it, and certain conservatives were afraid the undertaking might distract the union's attention from more pressing matters connected with the daily toil of its members. In answer to the first group of critics it was pointed out that the cooperatives gave an opportunity to prove to others that the workers could manage business undertakings, and hence would be of great value in preparing for the future society.

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[17] Speech before the American Assn. for Labor Legislation, reported in *Advance*, Jan. 7, 1921.

When the vote on the question was taken, a large majority enthusiastically directed the General Executive Board to proceed with its plans for a cooperative experiment.

Interest in Education

The A. C. W. believes that the union should concern itself with all sides of the worker's life. Education it holds to be essential if the workers are to be equal to their increasing responsibilities. The general officers stated in their report for 1920:

> The affairs of the world are coming into the hands of the working people, not as mere tools to do the work and ask no questions but as masters who are responsible for the proper treatment of these affairs. Those responsibilities are coming to the workers of all industries in the course of social progress as naturally as the ripening of fruit on the tree. They are ours whether we want them or not. We must have the education that will enable us to deal with them intelligently. . . . We have built up a code of industrial administrative machinery. The more intelligently we conduct this industrial government, the better for ourselves and society as a whole.[18]

At the 1920 convention it was decided to put into operation an extensive educational campaign which would fit the workers for real industrial democracy. Classes had already been established in English, Economics, and History in several cities, and papers were being issued by the union in seven languages, but the organization planned to develop its educational work much more fully. During the recent lockout, the Amalgamated Labor College was opened in New York City, with 35 students who attended daily for a month and took up definite studies to fit them for usefulness in the labor movement. The *Advance* for January 21, 1921, calls this the "first full time educational institution under complete labor union auspices in

[18] *Report of the Executive Board of the A. C. W.*, 1920, p. 182.

America." In Rochester it has recently been decided to compel all new members of the union to attend at least two classes for instruction. The organization believes that if the transition to the new social order is to be one of peaceful and civilized progress, education must have first place. In all its activities—its democratic management of the union, its assumption of responsibility for the welfare of the industry, its experiment with cooperation, and its educational work—the Amalgamated is thus trying to prepare its members, slowly and painstakingly, for industrial responsibility, so that they may be ready for the new day.

2. The Needle Trades Workers' Alliance and Its Component Unions

Forming of the Alliance

For several years there has been a growing sentiment in the needle trades that the different unions engaged in making wearing apparel should unite in one large organization for the whole needle industry. The A. C. W. has desired a complete amalgamation, but some of the other unions have felt that a federation or alliance was all that was desirable at the present time. The International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union has made various attempts to have a needle trades department formed within the A. F. of L., but its efforts have failed chiefly because the A. C. W., the largest of the needle unions, is still bitterly opposed by the officials of the A. F. of L., and especially by the United Garment Workers, and any federation of needle unions which omitted the dominant one in the men's clothing industry would be bound to be a farce.

Nevertheless the various needle unions, with the ex-

ception of the United Garment Workers, have continued their efforts to draw closer together, and on December 9, 1920, the long-desired Needle Trades Workers' Alliance became a reality. It includes three unions affiliated with the A. F. of L., the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, the International Fur Workers' Union, and the Journeymen Tailors' Union; the A. C. W. which has always been outside of the Federation; and the United Cloth Hat and Cap Makers' Union which was suspended a few years ago but is now seeking re-entrance into the A. F. of L. The new Alliance includes about 300,000 workers in the needle trades of the country. Next to the A. C. W., the International Ladies' Garment Workers have the largest organization in the group. The paid-up membership of the union as officially stated in June, 1920, was 132,756,[19] but at the A. F. of L. convention the following year representation was on the basis of only 94,100 members. In 1920 the International Fur Workers' Union came next in size with about 12,100 members; then the United Cloth Hat and Cap Makers with 10,691; and finally the Journeymen Tailors' Union with about 12,000. In 1921 the order was reversed, however, the Tailors still reporting 12,000, the Cap Makers only 8,310,[20] and the Fur Workers 4,500.

The Needle Trades Workers' Alliance was formed when the recent struggle of the A. C. W. in New York was just beginning, and one of its first acts was to pledge its unqualified support to the men's clothing workers—a pledge which the affiliated unions loyally fulfilled. This "defensive and offensive" alliance was formed to "act in advisory capacity for the various affiliated international unions with regard to strikes, lockouts, organizing work and trade matters," and to "assist the affiliated organiza-

[19] *Justice*, Nov. 19, 1920, p. 3.
[20] *Headgear Worker*, Aug. 5, 1921.

tions in times of struggles with their employers by every means at its command." [21] Each union, however, is to preserve its autonomy without interference in its internal affairs. The Alliance has an executive council of fifteen members, three from each of the five organizations belonging to it. Its head is Benjamin Schlesinger, president of the International Ladies' Garment Workers, and its secretary and treasurer come from the Cloth Hat and Cap Makers' and Journeymen Tailors' Unions respectively. The drawing together of these different bodies marks a significant advance in industrial unionism.

The Ladies' Garment Workers' Union—Origin

The International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union was organized in 1900, and at once joined the A. F. of L. Although the union has always been Socialistic and has often disapproved of the stand taken by the Federation, it has retained its affiliation with it ever since. The preamble to the constitution of the union states that the only way for the workers to "get the full value of their product is to organize industrially into a class conscious labor union." Unlike that of the A. C. W., however, it puts great emphasis on the need for political representation of the workers "by representatives of the political party whose aim is the abolition of the capitalist system," and is less clear in its analysis of the principles of industrial unionism. A large proportion of the members are Socialists, and the union as a whole is distinctly radical in its outlook.

Joint Agreements

The tactics and structure of the organization are much like those of the A. C. W. In 1910, after a great strike

[21] *Advance*, Dec. 17, 1920.

of the cloak makers in New York, the famous "protocol," the first collective agreement in the ready-made clothing industry, was established for the cloak, suit, and skirt workers. Besides various regulations in regard to hours, wages, the abolition of home work and sub-contracting, it established the preferential union shop, a Board of Arbitration and Committee on Grievances, and a Joint Board of Sanitary Control to establish and maintain standards of sanitation. This protocol remained in force for five years. Increasing friction and dissatisfaction on both sides caused the agreement to be broken off temporarily in 1915, and, after a brief period of renewal, to be definitely terminated in 1916. A general strike lasting fourteen weeks then took place in New York, after which a new agreement limited to three years was negotiated. The system of arbitration of the protocol was not renewed however. Meanwhile collective agreements had been made in the dress and waist branch of the industry, also.

Early in 1919 the conflict broke out anew, and serious strikes of both the cloak workers and the dress and waist workers ensued. The successful ending of these strikes resulted in agreements in both of these branches of the industry, providing for the forty-four hour week, increased wages, and for the cloak makers week-work instead of piece-work. The preferential shop and Joint Board of Sanitary Control were retained, shop strikes were forbidden, and provision made for the review of discharges and reinstatement when injustice appeared to have been done. The dress and waist agreement arranged for a grievance board with an impartial chairman paid by both sides to settle disputes. Similar agreements were formed in many other branches of the ladies' garment industry throughout the country, with varying degrees of success. The General Executive Board reported twenty-

five such contracts with employers' associations in 1920. In New York the Joint Board of Sanitary Control has continued to function ever since it was first established in 1910, and has done excellent work in enforcing standards of sanitation and safety, establishing cooperative medical and dental clinics, and helping the union found a tuberculosis sanitorium for its own members. The board is supported equally by the manufacturers and the union, and includes representatives of the general public as well as of the two sides directly concerned.

In 1920 both the Dress and Waist Manufacturers' Association and the Cloak, Suit and Skirt Manufacturers' Protective Association in New York broke off their agreements with the union. In the dress and waist trade a brief general strike which was called in February, 1921, for the purpose of unionizing the industry, practically broke up the employers' association and resulted in a new organization which was ready to carry on collective bargaining with the union. In the cloak and suit trade, relations with the union were renewed by the manufacturers in June, 1921, and a joint commission was appointed to study production records and work out a plan for increasing productivity. Before the date on which this commission was to make its report, the manufacturers sent an ultimatum to the union, breaking off their agreement and declaring that after November 14 piece-work, a forty-nine hour week, and lower wages would be established. At the same time, manufacturers in several other cities also decreed a change from week-work to piece-work. A strike was at once called by the cloak makers of New York by an overwhelming vote, and 55,000 left their work on November 14. Soon afterwards the cloak makers of Montreal, Philadelphia, and Chicago also went out on strike to resist the introduction

of piece-work. An unusual incident of the struggle in New York was the granting of an injunction against the Manufacturers' Association forbidding it to aid or encourage its members to violate the agreement with the union. It was the first instance in which the power of injunction had been used against the manufacturers in a labor dispute. As a result of it, the employers were forced to take back their workers under the terms of the previous agreement.

Policies

The International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union is adopting policies similar to those of the A. C. W. in various respects. The appointment of a joint commission to study production records and work out plans for increasing productivity in New York, even though unsuccessful, was an attempt to establish standards of efficiency. Although the Ladies' Garment Workers have not yet gone as far as the A. C. W. in assuming responsibility for the industry, they are tending in the same direction. In regard to unemployment they are also thinking along the same lines. A significant step was taken in Cleveland in April, 1921, toward stabilizing the garment trades. The board of referees maintained by the Cleveland Garment Manufacturers' Association and the I. L. G. W. U. ruled that every regular worker should henceforth be guaranteed forty weeks employment during each year, to be divided into two periods of twenty weeks each. If the employer fails to provide work for the twenty-week period, the employee can draw from a guaranty fund maintained by the manufacturers two-thirds of his minimum wage for the time he is unemployed during that period. Each manufacturer deposits weekly in this fund a sum equal to 7½ per cent of his labor pay-roll. This

placing of the responsibility for unemployment squarely upon the employers has been vigorously advocated by the A. C. W. for the last couple of years. The I. L. G. W. U., like the A. C. W., is greatly interested in the cooperative movement, and has made plans for the establishment of a number of union-owned factories in New York, with retail stores elsewhere throughout the country for the sale of clothing made in these factories. Another point of similarity between the A. C. W. and the I. L. G. W. U. lies in their attitude toward immigration. The interest of both unions stretches out to the needle workers all over the world, and both believe that the best way to prevent immigrants from undercutting the standards of workers in America is to develop a world-wide federation of needle trades which will bring about true industrial solidarity among the garment workers of all countries.

Attitude toward Education

The Ladies' Garment Workers' Union have been pioneers in the field of workers' education, realizing the importance not only of a thorough understanding of the labor movement but also of a broad culture and general intelligence on the part of their members. In 1914 a special education committee was appointed by the General Executive Board, and made arrangements with the Rand School for various courses to be conducted under the joint direction of the union and the school. At the same time a vigorous educational movement was inaugurated by the Waist and Dress Makers' Union of New York. In 1916, the I. L. G. W. U. voted $5,000 from its treasury for the development of educational work, and two years later decided to appropriate $10,000 yearly for it.[22] In New York the cooperation of the public schools has

[22] Budish and Soule, *The New Unionism*, p. 216.

been secured, and in several of them "unity centers" have been established where classes in English, economics, physical training, and other subjects are held, and various social activities carried on for the members of the union. In one of the schools a "Workers' University" has been established by the educational department of the union for those members who are eager for more advanced work than is furnished by the popular courses at the unity centers. In Philadelphia similar courses are being given for members of the union, and efforts are being made to establish them in other clothing centers.

Types of Workers in Union

The I. L. G. W. U. has extended its control over many kinds of workers besides those in the cloak, suit, and skirt, and waist and dress trades. In New York, the chief center of the industry, it included in 1920 the following trade units: the children's dressmakers, the house dress and kimono workers, the private dressmakers, the petticoat workers, the New York goods workers, the Bonnaz embroiderers, the Swiss embroidery workers, the ladies' tailors, the waterproof garment workers, and the corset workers, besides the large Dress and Waist Makers' Union and the Joint Board of the Cloak, Skirt and Reefer Makers' Unions. The Cloak Makers' Joint Board included fourteen locals in 1920, most of them formed on craft lines. Operators, cutters, pressers, buttonhole makers, etc., were thus organized in separate locals. There is also a union of garment clerks, including both shipping and stock clerks in the cloak trade, which has recently been given a charter. Each local, regardless of its size, sends five delegates to the Joint Board,[23] which like the joint boards of the other needle unions is respon-

[23] Budish and Soule, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

sible for negotiating agreements, making decisions in regard to strikes, and looking after the welfare of all the workers in the trade in the locality. Over 53,000 workers were represented in it in June, 1920.[24]

Dress and Waist Workers of New York

The dress and waist workers in New York until recently were organized in one huge local, including all crafts but the cutters, and having a total membership of over 25,000 in 1919. It was said to be the largest local of women in the country. It began with a small nucleus, but after the dramatic strike of 1909 when almost the entire trade went out, it leaped suddenly into great prestige and has maintained an important position and a large membership ever since. Within the last few years it has grown so large as to be unwieldy, however, and subdivision according to race and craft has consequently begun to appear. At the end of 1919 an Italian branch known as Local 89 of the Ladies' Waist and Dress Makers was formed. The introduction of new machinery has strengthened a movement for making subdivisions also for pressers, finishers, and other crafts. In May, 1920, the general convention of the ladies' garment workers decided that it was time to reorganize the dress and waist makers, grouping them into smaller units which would be represented on a joint board. Accordingly such a board was organized in October of that year by representatives of the Waist and Dress Makers' Union (known as Local 25), the waist and dress division of the cutters' local, the Bonnaz embroiderers' local, and the pressers' branch of the Waist and Dress Makers' Union. A new local to include all the dressmakers was formed in December, with the understanding that the dressmakers who be-

[24] *Justice*, Oct. 15, 1920.

longed to Local 25 should be transferred to the new body. An editorial in *Justice,* the official journal of the union, for October 8, 1920, states that this step was necessary because Local 25 was too large to function normally. Only a small proportion of the members attended meetings, whereas the majority were apathetic. Many misunderstandings and disputes kept breaking out in the union, and there was no opportunity for intelligent discussion in moderate-sized groups which might lead to mutual understanding; hence the local was losing in strength and influence. Furthermore the various trades did not derive any advantage from being in one local. In the early days of organizing girls in the needle industry, the union could not afford to make trade divisions, and hence gathered them all into one local. The trades were not so markedly different from each other then as they have since become, the editorial declared. With the passage of time it had become apparent that the various trades could defend their interests most effectively by being organized in distinct locals. An interesting sidelight is thrown on the whole question of industrial unionism by the statement that:

> [While recognizing as a general principle] that there exists no difference between workers and workers and that as members of the working class they are one and undivided, [and while] declaring that when the decisive moment for striking a blow for the emancipation of the workers will come, all differences between one worker and another must disappear, and they must be welded into one great fighting camp, we nevertheless maintain that while the preliminaries of this struggle are being fought out from day to day by the workers in the shops, this general idea can find no practical application.

The Journeymen Tailors' Union

The oldest of the unions in the new Alliance is the Journeymen Tailors' Union, which was organized in

1883 among the custom tailors, and joined the A. F. of L., a few years later. It has been involved in various jurisdictional troubles with the unions in the ready-made clothing trades, because of the introduction of cheap custom tailoring into factories. The Journeymen Tailors have claimed jurisdiction over all engaged in the production of custom-made clothing (to the order and measure of each individual customer) wherever the work is done, and also over "bushelmen" who do alteration work in ready-made clothing stores. Partly because they felt the practical need for a closer affiliation between the different needle unions, and partly because they elected in 1909 a secretary who stood strongly for industrial unionism, the Journeymen Tailors were among the first to press for amalgamation.[25] Being discouraged with the slow progress toward that end, the union took a radical step in 1913 by deciding to extend its own jurisdiction to include all needle workers, and to change its name to the "Tailors' Industrial Union." When it began to organize workers claimed by the other garment unions, of course a protest was made to the A. F. of L., which promptly declared this extension of jurisdiction illegal and ordered the tailors to meet with the United Garment Workers to consider amalgamation. Shortly after this came the split in the latter organization, and the tailors decided to join the seceding faction, which became the A. C. W., as it was more in accord with their ideas of industrial unionism. The two executive boards met in conference in January, 1915, and agreed on the provisions of amalgamation, but hardly was the union of the two bodies consummated than a strong opposition movement began to develop within the Tailors' Union. This opposition was based on the fact that the vote on the question of amalgamation

[25] Stowell, *The Journeymen Tailors' Union of America*, p. 102.

was taken very hastily and without full realization that it meant joining an outlaw organization and thus shutting themselves out of the A. F. of L. The number of opponents was increased by a certain amount of friction connected with the details of amalgamation, so that when the pressure of the dissenters forced a new vote on the question a few months later, a big majority of those voting declared in favor of withdrawing from the A. C. W. and going back to their old name and jurisdiction.[26] The journeymen tailors then returned to the A. F. of L., and to the conservative policies which had been characteristic of their union in earlier years. Although the organization has had to fight against many handicaps, due to the steady encroachments of the ready-made garment trade, it has had a fair degree of success in making contracts with employers and securing reasonable hours and wages for its members.

United Cloth Hat and Cap Makers—Early History

The United Cloth Hat and Cap Makers of North America, which was organized in 1901 by delegates from nine locals previously formed, has from the beginning had a radical philosophy. Its preamble gives as one of its aims the "final emancipation of the wage-earner" and the "establishment of the Cooperative Commonwealth." Throughout its history the union has been faithful to the Socialist movement. In 1919 it declared in favor of the new Labor Party and recommended cooperation between that and the Socialist Party. At first the union voted to remain independent, but the year after it was organized it decided to affiliate with the A. F. of L. In 1905 the I. W. W. tried to win the Cap Makers away from this affiliation, and when they decided not to withdraw, suc-

[26] Stowell, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

ceeded in splitting the union.[27] The Cap Makers regained complete jurisdiction over their trade eventually, however. In 1915 the union came into conflict with the United Hatters, who in that year decided to admit the women's straw hat makers and asked jurisdiction over them. In 1903 the Cloth Hat and Cap Makers' union had been granted the right to include all millinery workers, and large numbers of them had been successfully organized by that body. Nevertheless the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. reversed its former decision and granted the request of the United Hatters. By an overwhelming vote the Cap Makers refused to accept this decision and consequently were suspended by the A. F. of L. and have remained outside it ever since. Efforts have been made on their part to bring about an amalgamation with the United Hatters, and in 1920 both the Executive Council and Convention Committee of the A. F. of L. recommended such a solution, but due to the hostility of the general secretary of the Hatters it failed of passing by one vote.[28] Negotiations in regard to the matter have been renewed, however, and an elaborate plan for amalgamation has been worked out by the Cap Makers and presented for consideration, so there is hope that all the headgear workers, including makers of felt hats, men's straw hats, women's millinery, and cloth hats and caps, may be united.

Structure

The Cap Makers' union is similar to the A. C. W. in structure, having joint councils representing separate locals of operators, cutters, trimmers, and other crafts, in large cities; and in smaller places single locals which include

[27] Budish and Soule, *op. cit.*, p. 78.
[28] *Headgear Worker*, July 2, 1920.

all branches of the industry. New York has two trade units, the Joint Council of Cap Makers and the Joint Board of Ladies' Straw Hat and Millinery Workers. The joint council or board controls all strike agreements and other matters connected with the organization, as the local has little power. Shop committees, originally appointed for arranging piece rates, and shop chairmen exist throughout the industry. Although having no legal status, the shop chairmen are most important and their opinions carry great weight. They are close enough to the other workers to understand their point of view and interpret it, and the decisions of the chairmen are usually carried out in the union. All matters of importance must be passed on by the entire membership, but frequently the opinions of the rank and file may be obtained informally through the shop chairmen.

Policies

The Cap Makers were the first of the clothing unions to secure a 100 per cent organization and the universal closed shop in the cloth hat and cap trade.[29] An agreement made in 1919 provided that no manufacturer should give out work to non-union shops, or sell goods to any concern where there is a strike.[30] The millinery branch has been somewhat less successful, due partly to the dispute with the hatters, but it has considerable strength. The union in New York has recently been engaged in a controversy with the employers over the question of piece-work and standards of production. The week-work system, together with the forty-four hour week, had been gained in 1919, but the employers in January, 1921, demanded a return to piece-work, claiming that production

[29] Budish and Soule, *op. cit.*, p. 80.
[30] *Ibid.*, p. 154.

fluctuated too much under the week system, and any accurate estimate of labor cost was impossible. The union, like the A. C. W. in its controversy over the same question, proposed a joint investigation of the problem and also presented a plan for production standards, both of which the employers refused. Counter proposals made by them were refused by the workers, but a compromise was finally effected, according to which the setting of production standards for all except cutters and packers was left to an arbitration committee made up of two representatives from each side and a chairman who had had considerable experience in adjusting difficulties in New York industries.[31] The union proposes a system by which the workers are to be divided into classes with a $5 a week difference in wage. If the worker falls below the standard of work set for his class during an eight weeks' period, or rises above it, he is to be demoted or promoted to another class. Similar systems are already in operation in the industry in Chicago and St. Paul.

Plan for Cooperative Factories

The union has just launched a scheme for starting cooperative factories in the cloth hat and cap industry, and is hoping to develop the undertaking on a large scale. A $100,000 fund is now being raised for the purpose. It is hoped that the experiment will not merely furnish employment for some of the members of the union, but also serve as a scientific laboratory for supplying first-hand knowledge about shop management, division of labor, normal production, and the various difficulties to be met in the trade. Such knowledge will not only be of great value in negotiations with employers, but will also prepare the workers for a larger measure of control of in-

[31] *Headgear Worker*, Feb. 11, 1921.

dustry in the future. To quote from the *Headgear Worker*:

> In an industry like ours, there is no telling whether under pressure this modest cooperative effort may not become the beginning of a reconstruction of the entire industry on a cooperative basis. The comparatively small number of people employed in the industry, the fact that they are practically all organized, the fact that the industry needs no very great investment of capital, and that its product is consumed by workers and farmers, would seem to make it possible for the industry to pass to a cooperative management even before a fundamental change of the present social order has been brought about.[32]

Fur Workers' Union—General Character

The International Fur Workers' Union of the United States and Canada is younger than the other clothing unions, not having been organized in its present form till 1913, though many locals existed previous to that time and one or two earlier attempts to establish an international organization had been made. Like the other garment unions, it has a large proportion of Socialists among its members. Its preamble, though vaguely referring to the class struggle, shows no special sign of a radical philosophy, however, and lays stress on the protection of the immediate interests of the craft rather than on the solidarity of the workers or on any program for their ultimate emancipation. The union has been affiliated with the A. F. of L. since its organization.

Structure

Although no mention of industrial unionism is made in the constitution, as a matter of fact the fur workers are organized in much the same way as the members of the

[32] *Headgear Worker*, Dec. 3, 1920.

other needle unions. Outside of New York, all crafts in a district are included in a single local. The constitution mentions thirty-two different crafts of fur workers which are eligible to membership. In New York where the bulk of the industry is found, different crafts are organized in separate locals which are united by joint boards. The Joint Board of the Furriers' Unions of Greater New York comprises four locals and about 60 per cent of the membership. It functions in the same way that the boards of the other garment unions function. The Joint Board of the Fur Cap and Trimming Workers, which includes four locals, and that of the Fur Dressers and Dyers in Brooklyn, with five locals, have much less power, acting chiefly in an advisory capacity. The locals in these branches of the industry have complete autonomy but cooperate in office management and a few other particulars by means of the joint boards. The reason for this is that several of these locals were formed many years before the International came into being, and have insisted on maintaining their old policies. The differences in dues paid and other provisions make a closer affiliation between these locals somewhat difficult. Besides these joint boards, there exists a local of Hatters Fur Workers, directly affiliated with the International. Most of the crafts in the union require a fair degree of skill, and one or two of them a very high degree. The dyers, however, are unskilled. According to Mr. Wenneis, the general secretary, about 90 per cent of the workers in the fur manufacturing branch of the industry are controlled by the union, and about 50 per cent in the dressing and dyeing branch. If the dressers who work on Hudson seal are excluded, however, the union includes about 100 per cent of the workers in this branch.

Policies

The closed shop is maintained by the Fur Workers, and the forty-four hour week has been secured. In 1919 an agreement between the Associated Fur Manufacturers and the Joint Board of Furriers' Unions of Greater New York was signed, to run for two years. This provided for a Conference Committee, with five representatives of each side and a representative of the public as chairman, to consider problems affecting the entire industry, and a Committee on Immediate Action to deal with individual disputes. Various regulations in regard to overtime work, a minimum wage scale for different classes of workers, prohibition of piecework, inspection of shops of contractors and enforcement of the same conditions there as in the shops of the manufacturers, and other matters dealing with the industry, were also included. In spite of the provision prohibiting strikes and lockouts, however, a strike was called in New York in May, 1920, to protest against wholesale discharges and to force the employers to distribute their work equally among the workers during the slack season, in order to reduce unemployment. The principle of equitable division of work was included in the agreement, but had not been carried out to the extent that the union felt was necessary. The Conference Committee had been unable to come to any decision on the matter, and the chairman refused to settle it as he claimed it was outside his province. The strike which resulted, involving all members of the furriers' locals and many in the auxiliary trades of fur cap making and trimming, lasted for thirty weeks and greatly weakened the organization. The strikers were obliged to go back to work without winning their fight, but the old agreement was renewed for another year. Before the strike the membership of the union was 12,000, but it was temporarily reduced by

the long struggle. In June, 1921, only 4,500 members were reported.

Interest in Education and Cooperation

The Fur Workers have joined with other garment unions in the United Education Committee, which has done good work in developing workers' education, but have taken no important steps along this line by themselves. They are interested in the cooperative movement and have appointed a committee to consider the possibility of establishing a fur dressing and dyeing establishment on a cooperative basis. The chaotic condition of the industry has made such a step impossible up to this time, however. So much capital is necessary for securing skins that the union could not attempt to carry on the whole process of fur manufacture, and it is uncertain whether or not the manufacturers would countenance a contracting establishment sufficiently to allow it to get fur to handle. Local 20 of the Fur Cap and Trimming Workers is planning to join with the United Cloth Hat and Cap Makers in starting their new cooperative factory, however, and is to be responsible for the department making fur caps.

Conclusion

In summing up, we may say that four of the unions of the Needle Trades Workers' Alliance are very similar in structure and policies, in their interest in cooperation and education, and in the system of industrial democracy which they have sought to introduce wherever they have gained control, while at least three of them look forward definitely to the overthrow of the present capitalist system and the establishment of the cooperative commonwealth.

CHAPTER VIII

INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM IN THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY

The United Textile Workers

The textile industry furnishes a peculiar opportunity to study the development of industrial unionism. For many years craft organizations have existed in this field, some affiliated with the A. F. of L. and some independent. In 1901 the United Textile Workers was formed by the coming together of some of these bodies, and was granted jurisdiction by the A. F. of L. over all workers in the textile industry with the exception of the mule spinners and the lace operatives. These groups of workers kept their own separate organizations under charters from the A. F. of L. until 1919, when they were ordered to affiliate with the U. T. W. and were suspended for refusing. There are several independent craft organizations in the industry, but the U. T. W. is now the only textile union which is recognized by the A. F. of L. Although theoretically it is an industrial union, as it claims jurisdiction over all workers in the industry, its spirit and, for the most part, its methods are those of the old craft unionism. In the South and in a few places in the North it has organized general textile locals in which workers of all grades are included, but in most northern centers it is little more than a federation of skilled crafts. Although it includes the unskilled to some extent, it has paid more attention to the skilled workers and has organized a much larger proportion of them. There is little democracy in the union and its

spirit is decidedly conservative. The great mass of the workers in the industry have been utterly untouched by it. In spite of the existence of the various textile unions, there were said to be about 900,000 unorganized workers in the industry at the time when the new industrial union known as the Amalgamated Textile Workers of America was born, early in 1919. Today from 75 to 85 per cent of the million textile workers of the country are still unorganized, according to estimates of different union officials. It will be interesting to discover if the Amalgamated Textile Workers proves any more successful than the older unions in meeting this challenge.

Reasons for Slow Progress

Organization of the industry has been slow for various reasons. Officials of the Amalgamated Textile Workers attribute it largely to conservatism and lack of real interest in the rank and file on the part of officers of the United Textile Workers, and to the craft spirit which has prevailed in all the textile unions, causing one craft group to "scab" upon another. The character of the labor force, however, has afforded special difficulties. With the introduction of new machinery, processes have become so easy that in most departments only a small degree of skill is required. The trade can be learned in a very short time and as a result workers shift from one kind of work to another continually. A large proportion of the workers are women and children, and their presence helps maintain the low wages which prevail in the industry, while on the other hand the low wages help to force them into the mills to supplement the earnings of the male wage-earners. Immigrants crowd into the industry in large numbers, apparently being encouraged to do so by the manufacturers. Mr. Raymond Swing in an article in the

Nation charges the textile manufacturers with a deliberate policy of gathering up the peasants of Europe to operate the looms of New England and of so distributing them that no more than 15 per cent of any one race were employed in a single mill.[1] Thus men and women racially hostile to each other were put to work side by side, in order that organization might be made impossible. Whether this specific charge is true or not, the presence of many different foreign-born groups, which have in the past contained many transients, has made the task of organization far from easy. In the northern mills foreign-born workers are decidedly in the majority. In Lawrence just before the strike of 1919, Italians, Syrians, Poles, Lithuanians, and Germans were said to make up nearly 90 per cent of the workers. Besides these there was a large group of French Canadians, and numerous Russians, Ukranians, Greeks, Portugese, Franco-Belgians, and other nationalities. Any union which hopes to control the textile industry must solve the problem of uniting these various elements.

The size of the industry with its hundreds of different processes helps make the work of organization difficult. Certain obstacles which exist in the clothing industry, to be sure, are less apparent here. Home work is rare and sweat-shop competition does not cause the chaotic conditions which have been characteristic of the clothing trade until very recently. Large scale production in factories representing heavy investment in the plant, machinery, and power, is the rule in the cotton and wool branches of the trade. New establishments, therefore, cannot spring up easily and disappear suddenly in those branches, and thus the problem of retaining territory once won should be less difficult than it is in some trades. On the other

[1] *Nation*, April 26, 1919, p. 650.

hand, the task of organizing the workers in the large factories is often harder than in smaller shops where employees are more closely united. In the silk industry where the shops are small and relatively unstable, the A. T. W. has had greater success in organizing the workers than it has in the huge cotton mills, for the disadvantages of instability are offset by the greater ease with which the workers in the small shops can be educated in the principles of industrial unionism.

The Lawrence Strike of 1919

The strike of the Lawrence workers early in 1919 was perhaps the most important event leading to the formation of the Amalgamated Textile Workers in April of that year. Before the strike there were only 200 members of the United Textile Workers, and 600 others organized in an independent union, out of a mill force of from 30,000 to 35,000. The immediate cause of the break was the refusal of the employers to grant the forty-eight hour week, which the U. T. W. demanded, without a decrease in wages. The U. T. W. officials favored acceptance of this decrease, probably because they felt a strike at that time to be inexpedient because of the dullness of the season, but the great mass of the workers had no patience with this policy, and, refusing to allow any shrinkage in wages which were already far from adequate, went out on strike for "48 hours' work with 54 hours' pay." The union officials, backed by the central labor body of the city and the A. F. of L., refused to support the strike in any way and denounced it as a revolutionary movement, thereby causing great bitterness in the minds of unorganized strikers. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers, however, came to their assistance with generous support, and three former clergymen who had decided

to throw themselves into the labor struggle took an active part in leading the new movement. In spite of the great provocation furnished by the police, who clubbed law-abiding pickets, broke up peaceful meetings, and persecuted the leaders, the strike was conducted with a marked absence of violence on the part of the workers, due to the constant preaching of the doctrine of non-resistance by those who were directing them.

Cooperation of Different Nationalities

The sense of solidarity manifested by the different national groups and their willingness to forget racial antagonisms and work together for their common cause was very striking. The general strike committee which met every morning was composed of delegates from each of the eleven nationalities, who struggled valiantly to overcome not only language difficulties but barriers of many kinds in their great experiment in cooperation. The same spirit was shown in the general relief committee where the chairmen of the different nationality committees met to consider the regulation of soup kitchens and distribution of other forms of relief to the most needy. One instance of the triumph of "morale" was the vote of the Italian strikers to accept no food rations for three days longer, after being without them for a week, because they knew the funds were getting low. There were many acts of sacrifice on the part of foreign workers in nearby cities, who sent money to help the Lawrence strikers instead of using it for their own pressing needs. Although most of the English-speaking workers drifted back to the mills during the strike, the ranks of the principal foreign groups stood firm during the sixteen weeks, and went back only after a 15 per cent increase in wages, more than had been asked for, was announced by the mill owners in May.

Forming of the Amalgamated Textile Workers

Meanwhile spontaneous strikes broke out in Passaic and other textile centers, and dissatisfaction with the old unions in the industry was becoming widespread. In many cities and towns, workers had broken away from the United Textile Workers and formed independent unions, feeling that their interests had been betrayed by their own officials, whom they held to be out of touch with the rank and file and more interested in keeping the good will of the employers than in advancing the welfare of their members. Some of these unions, and also certain independent organizations which had never been connected with the U. T. W., were now desiring new affiliations, and various workers who had been members of the I. W. W. were ready to join them. Workers who had hitherto been unorganized were coming together, also, and in some cases applying to the Amalgamated Clothing Workers for charters. The A. C. W. refused all such applications as it could not undertake the task of organizing textile workers, but it encouraged the formation of a new national textile union with which it could cooperate. Accordingly in April, 1919, a convention attended by seventy-five or eighty delegates from Lawrence, Passaic, Paterson, Hudson County (New Jersey) and New York met in New York City and formed a new national organization, the Amalgamated Textile Workers of America. Although different tendencies in the labor movement were represented, all were agreed as to the need for an industrial union of all in the textile industry, which should prepare the workers for the ultimate control of production. It was unanimously decided to take over the preamble of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers bodily—though the Lawrence group had already drawn up one that was somewhat similar—and to issue a call to all textile workers to

join in organizing a class conscious industrial union, to be controlled by the rank and file. Greetings were also extended to Soviet Russia—an act which caused much misunderstanding on the part of the public.

Constitutional Provisions

The constitution adopted by the new textile union was based on the determination to keep the seat of government in the rank and file, not in the officials. All members of the General Executive Board, except the general secretary, must be actual wage-earners in the industry. At the second convention, held in October, 1919, a motion to make men who were not working in the mill eligible to the board was defeated, on the ground that a "machine" might thereby be built up.[2] The general secretary is the only elected official in the union who is paid. At present he serves also as treasurer and editor of the official journal, the *New Textile Worker*. Mr. A. J. Muste, one of the clergymen leaders of the Lawrence strike, was elected the first general secretary and continued in office until October, 1921. The general secretary and the nine members of the General Executive Board are elected by referendum, after nomination at the annual convention. The referendum is also used to pass on all amendments to the constitution which have been voted by the convention or proposed by six locals in the interim between conventions. The General Executive Board may at any time submit questions of importance to the membership for decision. According to provisions adopted at the second convention, the general office has no authority to call or prohibit strikes, but all locals are bound to consult with it before striking. No local needs to follow the advice of the General Executive Board, though the moral and

[2] *New Textile Worker*, Nov. 8, 1919,

financial support which comes from the approval of the central organization is of course valuable.

Form of Organization

Both initiation fees and dues are determined by the local, though the former may not be over $5. Dues range from 50 cents to $1.25 a month, of which 32 cents goes to the central office. Each local is authorized to "create subdivisions or branches according to the requirements of the situation" and to make any necessary laws for self-government which do not conflict with the general constitution. Locals differ somewhat in their organization and methods, but the constitution adopted by the Hudson local is one which is considered a model for others to follow. It provides for shop unions, composed of all workers in a given mill—weavers, warpers, twisters, dyers, and even carpenters—and for a general shop delegates' board composed of craft delegates from each shop union, on the basis of one delegate for each craft, with one additional delegate for every fifty workers in the craft. These shop delegates are elected every six months, and can be recalled at any time by a two-thirds vote. All officials of the local, including the Executive Board, are elected by the shop delegates. The Trimming Workers' local in New York has shop committees with representatives of each craft, in the larger shops, and shop chairmen who meet together every two weeks. The majority of locals have not yet adopted the shop form of organization, however. Lawrence groups the workers according to nationality rather than according to shop. A few places have subdivisions according to craft; and some have departments, such as the upholstery, dress trimming, spool cotton, and braid departments of the Trimming Workers. In New York and Philadelphia where several locals exist,

joint boards have been organized to coordinate their activities. The New York board has representatives of the different branches of the industry found in the city—knit goods workers, textile trimming workers, silk ribbon workers, block printers, and Persian rug weavers. (Other important branches of the industry, cotton, wool, and broad silk, are not found in New York.) In general a local includes workers in only one branch. In Philadelphia, the joint board has representatives of different crafts—loom fixers, weavers, and spinners—as well as of branches such as the knit goods workers, trimmers, and hosiery workers.

Meetings Held

In most locals there are several types of meetings. In the first place, all the workers in a single shop meet frequently to discuss matters connected with their work. They are called together whenever occasion arises. In Passaic such meetings were held nearly every night for awhile. Separate nationalities meet frequently, and informal meetings of all of the same craft in the same local are sometimes held, even where no separate organization of crafts exists. At regular intervals, meetings of all workers in the local are held, and in large centers there are also general meetings of all in the textile industry. According to one of the business agents of the New York Trimming Workers, there is little interest in these general gatherings, and it is hard to get the members out to them. The most popular meetings are those of separate shops, and next of interest to the workers are those of the different crafts. In other words, among the trimming workers at any rate, the sense of solidarity is strongest among those who are working side by side in the shop, and next strongest among those who do the same kind of work, whereas the industry as a whole calls forth little of it.

Spirit of the Rank and File

The rank and file of the membership is more alert in some places than in others. One of the leaders in the union says that in Lawrence the hands of the officials are really tied because of the radical democracy of the workers, whereas in Passaic the majority are so cowed by the spy system there in operation that they have little initiative. On the whole it may be said that the rank and file determine general policies, whereas the officials determine the tactics used in carrying out those policies. According to Mr. Long, one of the organizers for the union, the class consciousness and sense of solidarity expressed in the preamble exist not merely among the leaders, but are strong in the average member. The ideas in the movement have come from the members themselves, he declares. I. W. W. activity in Lawrence and Paterson in former years has helped to spread class consciousness in those centers. Some of the members of the Amalgamated, especially those in locals which have come over bodily from the older unions, are not yet in sympathy with the ideas expressed in the preamble, however. No attempt is made to force them to subscribe to it, though the leaders hope that in time they may learn to recognize its truth. On the other hand, some of the officers of the organization believe that the majority of the rank and file know little about the preamble and have little conception of the solidarity of labor. According to an officer of the New York trimming workers, there is a small group in each shop which is vitally interested in the union; the rest have confidence in these and will follow them in times of crisis, but are indifferent to anything but their own immediate welfare. It is only the closed shop principle that impels them into the union. "The rank and file are always conservative," he says, "but the militant minority must educate them."

The members of his local dislike going to meetings, and "won't stand for much that is serious," so the process of education is difficult. The New York trimming workers differ from other textile workers in that the majority of them are English-speaking people. The attitude of some other nationalities is different, this official admits. It may be noted in passing that the trimming workers did not join the A. T. W. until several months after its formation, so had no part in the adoption of the preamble. Nevertheless it is probably true that their attitude is shared by many other members of the organization.

Sense of Solidarity

The leaders of the A. T. W. believe that a sense of solidarity among the workers is being developed in two ways—through idealism and through self-interest. The skilled workers are being appealed to on idealistic grounds in order that they may realize how much the unskilled need their support, and also on more selfish grounds so that they may recognize their own need of the support of the unskilled. For instance, each skilled spinner in the Passaic mills has three girl assistants, any one of whom might act as a "scab" in time of strike by taking his place or that of one of the other men. For this reason the spinners are coming to see that their position would be greatly strengthened by having such girls in the union. Similarly the weavers are in many cases becoming eager to have the unskilled organized. This economic motive is probably the more potent of the two in binding the workers together, though idealism plays its part in attracting both the skilled and the unskilled workers. Mr. Muste, general secretary of the A. T. W. for its first two years, believes that the old feeling of the skilled against the unskilled is fast dying out. It still remains strong in

many places, however, and constitutes a real problem. According to one of the national organizers of the union, the silk ribbon weavers of New York who are working under the agreement which will be described later in the chapter, are not at all eager to have other workers in their branch of the industry organized and brought under this agreement. These other workers are largely unskilled, many of them being young girls, and the weavers fear that they would weaken the union instead of strengthening it. The principles of industrial unionism, though theoretically adhered to, may thus count for little when a concrete situation seems to make another policy more immediately advantageous. The skilled workers are in the majority in the union, probably, or at any rate form the backbone of the organization, though some locals, such as those in Lawrence and Passaic, are said to have more unskilled members than skilled. The problem of reaching the great mass of unskilled workers in the industry is still far from solved.

Early Rapid Progress

The new textile union made rapid progress in the first few months of its existence, winning strikes in Lawrence, Paterson, Passaic, Hudson County, and New York. At the second convention held October, 1919, it reported a membership of 50,000, with locals in all branches of the industry. Encouraged by the success of the Paterson silk workers in winning the forty-four hour week, the delegates voted to launch a forty-four hour campaign in other branches of the industry as soon as possible. At the convention were American, Scotch, Irish, and French Canadian delegates, as well as Italians, Poles, Lithuanians, and Jews. Mr. Muste in commenting on this convention said it was a gathering of workers seeking a radical change

in industry. They were not interested merely in shorter hours and higher wages, but looked far ahead to a future reorganization of the system of production. Yet many of them had never come in contact with revolutionary propaganda, but merely spoke the mind of the great mass of the workers when they declared for "freedom in industry" and absolutely democratic control of the conditions under which they worked.[8]

Strikes in Paterson and Elsewhere

The strike in Paterson furnishes an interesting example of the failure of the United Textile Workers to satisfy the workers. That organization had submitted the demand of its members for the forty-four hour week to the arbitration of the War Labor Board, without the consent of the membership, and the Board had decided that this decrease in hours should not be granted immediately. Members of the Amalgamated, who were not represented in the negotiations, refused to abide by this decision and went on strike for the immediate grant of the forty-four hour week. Thereupon members of the U. T. W. who were equally dissatisfied with the award went out also. As a result their officials tried to have the case reopened by the Board. Failing in this, they bent their energies to withdrawing their members from the strike, threatening all who remained out with expulsion. Many refused to obey orders, however, and withdrew from the U. T. W. Most of the ribbon and hat band workers formed a new organization known as the Associated Silk Workers, but some of the others who withdrew from the U. T. W. joined the Amalgamated. In this case, the officials of the the U. T. W. were condemned bitterly for being "hand in glove with the bosses." The real difficulty, however, was

[8] *New Textile Worker*, Nov. 8, 1919.

that there was a lack of democratic control in the union, so that the officials were able to make agreements against the will of the membership. When the agreement was once made they felt obliged to maintain it. Considerable pressure was brought to bear on the officials to submit the matter to the War Labor Board, of course, so perhaps they could not have done differently, but their failure lay in not convincing their members of the fact. In various other places the policies of the U. T. W. have proved so distasteful to its members that locals have broken away and gone over to the Amalgamated. In Allentown, Pa., the silk loom fixers and twisters, organized under the U. T. W., demanded an increased wage but were not permitted to strike until word reached the national officials that the A. T. W. had appeared on the scene. Even after sanction for a strike was granted, very little help was given by the national organization, and as a consequence the effort failed and many of the strikers left their old union in disgust and joined the A. T. W.[4]

Attacks upon the Amalgamated

The A. T. W. has been bitterly attacked not merely by rival unions, but also by employers and by public officials. In Passaic and Paterson long struggles for the right to hold meetings have been waged. Permits for meetings were refused, foreign speakers were prohibited, halls were closed, and peaceful meetings broken up. On one occasion in Passaic the lights were suddenly turned out by the police in the middle of an address, and the greater part of the audience driven out, to leave only a handful to listen to the reading of the New Jersey state constitution by candle light. The weapon of the injunction has also been used against the union on the ground that its aim is to establish

[4] *New Textile Worker*, June 19, 1920.

Soviet government in the United States. As evidence of this, in one instance, was stated the fact that no worker belonging to the union could be discharged without the consent of a shop committee—which is hardly a conclusive proof of Bolshevism.[5] Although the union does look forward to the day when the system of production shall be in the hands of the workers, it continually emphasizes its belief that the change to the new order must come about by peaceful and lawful means. Nevertheless its preamble has been used as an excuse for attacks upon it, just as has been true in the case of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers. Wherever the A. T. W. becomes strong, employers urge their workers to affiliate with the U. T. W. instead of with the more radical union—though in the South where the newer union has not penetrated, the opposition to the U. T. W. is often as great as that which the Amalgamated has to meet.

Effect of Depression

The A. T. W. has suffered severely from the long period of depression which struck the industry in the spring of 1920 and has continued ever since. Its first year was one of prosperity and rapid growth, as has been said. During that period it secured the forty-eight hour week for cotton and wool workers, the forty-four hour week for silk workers and dyers in New York and New Jersey, and several wage advances. Its 50,000 members were distributed in forty locals, established in eight different states. Massachusetts and New York were in the lead in the number of locals, followed by New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Illinois. In the territory covered by the A. T. W. the U. T. W. had at that time about 25,000 members,

[5] *New Textile Worker*, Oct. 9, 1920.

according to Mr. Muste. During the period while the A. T. W. had been growing, however, the older organization was pushing its own campaign vigorously, especially in the South, a field which the A. T. W. had not attempted to enter, and its membership as reported to the A. F. of L. in June, 1920, was about 105,000. In spite of this fact, the younger textile union claimed to control about one-fifth of the textile industry and one-half of the New England mills indirectly if not directly, due to the influence it had over many who were not its members. Soon after the first anniversary of the A. T. W., the effects of the depression began to be felt, however, and as the months of unemployment went by, the dues-paying membership shrank considerably. Nevertheless the union battled valiantly against heavy odds, and succeeded in holding its own remarkably well. In April, 1921, Mr. Muste reported that although in some places ground was lost, "in most places the time of testing has solidified our ranks and the locals are fundamentally in better condition than ever." [6] In no instance had the attempt to lengthen hours succeeded, and in many places no wage reductions or only very slight ones had been suffered by the members, though hundreds of thousands of unorganized textile workers were reduced from 20 to 50 per cent in wages. Wages in the silk mills of Hudson County, New Jersey, were cut 15 per cent but later restored to their previous level. In the fall of 1921, the general secretary said that the number of locals had decreased to twenty-two, but that in all centers where locals had previously existed conditions were such that they could quickly be revived as soon as the depression was over. The loss in numbers was not due to lack of interest but simply to financial stringency, and the fact that the union was able to keep its head above water at all during

[6] *New Textile Worker*, April 9, 1921.

the long months of unemployment was a sign of its great vitality.

The union has tried hard to have the available work divided evenly among all the workers during the slack period, and in some shops has succeeded in maintaining this principle. In one shop the firm was afraid production would suffer by allowing twenty of its weavers to lay off voluntarily in order that twenty unemployed weavers might have work, but nevertheless agreed to the experiment and was pleasantly surprised to find that production increased instead of diminishing. The weavers said that the firm was dealing squarely with them and they would therefore take extra pains to deal squarely with it and prevent any loss in efficiency.[7]

The Joint Agreement in the Silk Ribbon Trade

The policy of the Amalgamated Textile Workers has always been to make agreements with employers whenever possible—although the Lawrence local has declared against contracts with a definite time limit and endeavored to have a provision against them in the national constitution. In April, 1920, an interesting agreement was adopted by four of the leading silk ribbon manufacturers of New York with the three locals of silk ribbon weavers belonging to the A. T. W. Although it covers only about 300 workers, it is significant as an indication of the policy which the union would like to have adopted in other branches of the industry. The following paragraph in the preamble to the agreement well expresses its spirit:

> The parties to this pact realize that the interests sought to be reconciled herein ordinarily tend to pull apart, but they enter into this agreement in the faith that by the exercise of a cooperative and constructive spirit it will be possible to bring and keep them

[7] *New Textile Worker*, Dec. 11, 1920.

together. This will involve as an indispensable prerequisite the suppression of the militant spirit by both parties and the development of reason instead of force as the rule of action. It will require also mutual consideration and concession and a willingness on the part of each party to regard and serve the interests of the other for the common good. With this attitude assured it is believed that no differences can arise which this machinery cannot mediate and resolve in the interest of cooperation and harmony.

The preamble also declares in favor of increased production and pledges cooperation to that end. There is to be no intentional restriction of output, either by workers in order to increase wages or to equalize the productivity of weavers having different degrees of skill, or by employers in order to increase prices. On the other hand, no method which is harmful to the health or future of the workers is to be used.

Main Provisions

This agreement, like those of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, which have doubtless influenced it, provides for an impartial chairman supported by equal contributions from the two sides, and for a trade council with equal representation of employers and workers. Large powers are given to the impartial chairman, who has the final decision in regard to all grievances not adjusted in the shops by the shop committees or business agent of the union dealing directly with the management. He also is the final authority in regard to wages and general working conditions when the trade council is unable to reach a unanimous decision. He may fine either employer or employee for wilful disobedience to his rules and decisions, and hold the union or the association of manufacturers responsible for the payment of the fine. If a worker is discharged without just cause, he may order his reinstatement. On the other hand, if a worker stops work

or fails to appear for insufficient reasons, the impartial chairman has the power to deprive him of membership in the union—a drastic power which has not yet been used. If the initiation fees, assessments, and penalties imposed by the union are such as to deter workers from joining it, the impartial chairman may order a change in the amounts of such fees, etc., and the dates for paying them. No weaver may have his pay raised or lowered without the chairman's permission. The system of wage payment decreed by him when the trade council came to a deadlock over the question of piece-work provides for a minimum hourly wage for each of the three grades of skill found among the weavers, with the possibility of increasing that wage by turning out more than a specified amount of product in a specified time. Definite piece rates are established for different jobs by price committees in each shop, composed of two weavers and two representatives of the management. If the rate established for a new job proves unsatisfactory, the committee may reopen the case and, if necessary, call in the impartial chairman. In most cases, however, it is able to settle the rate without his help. The employer decides to which grade of skill each worker belongs, but the worker may appeal to the chairman if he believes himself to be unfairly treated in this respect.

The agreement provides for the preferential union shop, and forbids strikes and lockouts. Recently a plan for regulating apprenticeship was adopted by the trade council, providing for a period of training of at least three years, with payment starting at 40 per cent of the wages of a first-class weaver, and increasing 10 per cent every six months. Only one apprentice to every ten weavers in the shop may be admitted. This system of joint regulation of apprenticeship by the union and the employers is quite unusual. Additional firms may come under this agree-

ment, if approved by their fellow-employers, whenever they and their employees are ready to sign its provisions. At the present time only the weavers in these silk ribbon mills are organized, but it would be highly desirable to have the other workers included in the agreement. As has already been pointed out, however, little progress has yet been made toward bringing them within the union. When the agreement was first drawn up it was submitted to the membership of the three locals concerned, and by secret ballot an overwhelming majority voted in favor of adopting it and paying the large sum necessary for supporting it, although not all the members worked in the shops covered by it. A very large majority also voted for renewing it the following year. If the national organization did not feel that this was a first step toward establishing this method of settling difficulties throughout the industry, it is doubtful if it would have endorsed such a large expenditure for such a small number of workers.

Interest in Education and Cooperation

The textile workers, like the clothing workers, are interested in stimulating education, and a few locals have started classes in English, citizenship, and economics. Very high praise was given to these classes by a government investigator who made a report on adult education in Passaic. The real eagerness to learn on the part of the immigrant worker and the spirit of mutual helpfulness in the classroom, she found most inspiring.[8] Lectures illustrated by moving pictures have also been held in some places. The educational work of the union is only in its initial stages, however. The organization has also attempted some cooperative experiments. In Lawrence a

[8] Bureau of Education, Bulletin No. 4, 1920, *The Problem of Adult Education in Passaic.*

cooperative bakery and two retail stores have been started by the Amalgamated, and plans for similar undertakings elsewhere are under way. Although some friction has arisen between different national groups in connection with these cooperative stores, on the whole the movement has proved fairly successful. These educational and cooperative undertakings are significant, not so much for what they have yet accomplished, as for the indication they give of the interests of the union.

Movement for Affiliation with the A. C. W.

From the time of its formation, the A. T. W. has desired closer relations with the Amalgamated Clothing Workers. The latter organization did much to make the Lawrence strike a success and to encourage the formation of the new textile union, and has always been ready to extend to it a helping hand. Early in the career of the A. T. W. the two Amalgamateds engaged in a simultaneous strike in Utica under the joint auspices of the two bodies. At the conventions held in May, 1920, both organizations voted in favor of an ultimate union between the clothing and textile workers, and appointed a joint committee to work toward the establishment of one great organization which should unite all those engaged in handling the raw materials with those manufacturing the finished product, thus taking the first step toward that interindustrial alliance that their preambles prophesy. The fact that the new Needle Trades Workers' Alliance, formed in December, 1920, excluded the textile workers indicates, however, that this amalgamation is not to be immediate. The other clothing unions are not yet ready to reach out beyond the limits of their own industry—especially as the textile union with which the Amalgamated Clothing Workers most desires closer relations is outside the pale

of the A. F. of L. Although the inclusion of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers in the Alliance seemed essential, it was felt that opposition by the A. F. of L. would be increased by the unnecessary admission of another "outlaw" organization. The textile workers, however, are still hoping that some form of union with the clothing workers may be brought about in the future.

Forming of Federation of Textile Unions

The A. T. W. has also been reaching out toward closer relations with other textile unions. Negotiations for an exchange of membership cards with textile unions in Italy and Poland have been carried on, and recently a decided step toward the federation of textile unions in this country has been taken. In May, 1921, the A. T. W. called a conference of all the textile unions in the country that were outside the A. F. of L., and suggested that they form an amalgamation with one central headquarters. The delegates from the other unions were not willing to go as far as this, but they adopted a resolution in favor of federation and cooperation. The following August a second conference was held and a definite plan for an alliance to be called the Federated Textile Unions of America was drawn up to submit to a referendum of the membership. The unions represented at this conference were the Amalgamate Lace Operatives of America and the International Mule Spinners' Union, two organizations which had been suspended by the A. F. of L. in December, 1919, for refusing to affiliate with the United Textile Workers; the American Federation of Textile Operatives, a loose federation of different crafts which has been active in a number of New England cities; the American Federation of Full Fashioned Hosiery Workers; the Tapestry Carpet Workers; the Body Brussels Weavers; the Associated

Silk Workers of Paterson; and the Amalgamated Textile Workers. Two other organizations, the National Association of Loomfixers and the Mechanical Workers' Union of Amsterdam, New York, were represented at the May conference but were unable to send delegates in August. At a third gathering held early in December, it was reported that all these unions, with the exception of the American Federation of Full Fashioned Hosiery Workers and the International Mule Spinners' Union, which had not yet taken final action, had decided by referendum vote to join in forming the new alliance. The combined membership of these organizations is reported to be somewhat greater than that of the United Textile Workers. The drawing together of these different bodies, most of which are craft organizations, is an important step in the development of industrial unionism.

Constitution

The constitution which was ratified by the different unions provides that the federation is not to interfere with the autonomy of the various bodies but is to give advice and moral support to them, help in organizing the unorganized and in carrying on a campaign of education among them, serve as an agency for consultation on problems arising in the textile industry, and when necessary give financial support to the unions belonging to it. The General Executive Board, which is made up of two delegates from each union, may levy assessments for the relief of strikers upon a two-thirds vote, after a strike on the part of one of the affiliated unions has lasted for four weeks. The Board is then to pay $5 a week for each striker, though it may stop doing so whenever a settlement which it considers satisfactory is refused by the union involved. Unions which desire the financial support of

the federation are expected to seek the endorsement of the General Executive Board before entering upon a strike, though this requirement may be waived if the Board sees fit. The federation is to be financed by means of a small per capita tax.

Special emphasis is to be placed by the federation on cooperation upon the local field. In accordance with this principle, the Paterson local of the A. T. W. has just given up its charter and joined the Associated Silk Workers of Paterson, with the full consent and approval of its own national officers. The Associated Silk Workers is an industrial organization made up largely of ribbon and hat-band workers which has a strong standing in Paterson. The A. T. W. local, on the other hand, has been practically bankrupted by the long period of depression, which has affected the broad silk workers who make up the bulk of its membership, more seriously than it has the ribbon and hat-band workers of the other union. The officials of the A. T. W. believe that a strong industrial union in Paterson can be built up more effectively by merging their local with the Associated Silk Workers, and hence are willing to withdraw from that field themselves. Of course the financial situation of the union has something to do with this decision, but it is nevertheless an interesting example of real cooperation for the cause of industrial unionism. In Philadelphia the independent textile unions have cooperated since September, 1920, by means of a textile council, which was formed at the instigation of the joint board of the A. T. W. in that city. This textile council has undoubtedly helped to pave the way for federation on a wider scale.

Persistence of the Craft Spirit

Although the coming together of these independent textile unions is a significant move toward real industrial

unionism, the craft spirit is still very strong in the industry. Even within the A. T. W. some of the most powerful groups are on a craft basis, being composed simply of spinners or weavers, though this is contrary to the principles of the organization. In Philadelphia the A. T. W. is practically only a federation of strong crafts which have inherited the ideas of the United Textile Workers. According to Mr. Robert Dunn who has made a special study of the industry, the spirit of industrial unionism is perhaps stronger in the silk mills than in cotton or woolen mills, since the different processes are carried on under one roof and the various types of workers are thus more closely associated, but on the whole much of the craft spirit remains. Many groups have split off from the United Textile Workers, not through interest in progressive industrial unionism, but because of impatience with the methods of President Golden and the centralized control of his organization. These are not likely to bring to the new federation that sense of solidarity with all workers and that forward-looking idealism which are characteristic of industrial unionism at its best. Nevertheless the presence of the A. T. W. in the federation ought to do much to educate the other bodies in the principles of the "new unionism."

Attitude of the I. W. W.

The textile industry contains some industrial unionism of a more extreme form than that of the A. T. W. Both branches of the I. W. W. have organized textile workers in some places, and though their membership has been most unstable and they no longer have any control in the industry, they have had considerable influence. The I. W. W. Textile Workers' Union in Paterson, which is the only place where an I. W. W. local in the industry

still exists, has fought the new textile union with especial vigor, attacking it for its conservatism and compromise and calling it an "imitation industrial union" led by "ministers, college boys and politicians." In 1919 the I. W. W. local joined the United Textile Workers in trying to break the strike of the workers, and circulated pamphlets denouncing the A. T. W. leaders. These denunciations have continued ever since. In reply to a letter from one of the Amalgamated officials inquiring as to the causes of friction between the two organizations, the Paterson I. W. W. stated that the tactics of the A. T. W. in trying to swallow up their local made cooperation impossible. The fundamental differences between the two unions, they said, lay (1) in their attitude toward contracts, in regard to which the A. T. W. takes the "same reactionary stand as the A. F. of L. and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers"; (2) in their attitude toward arbitration; and (3) in the degree of official control.[9] The leaders of the A. T. W., they claimed, were trying to form a powerful machine to control the rank and file, and were "misleading and deceiving the workers into building up another tyrannical and reactionary machine like the Amalgamated Clothing Workers." Class conscious workers would soon regret having followed them.

I. W. W. and A. T. W. Compared

Mr. Long, one of the minister-leaders of the A. T. W., makes a different comparison between his organization and the I. W. W. They have the same ultimate hope for the control of production by the workers, and are equally radical in their philosophy, he says; but whereas the I. W. W. relies wholly on class consciousness and would go to pieces without it, the Amalgamated takes in people

[9] *Solidarity*, May 8, 1920.

whether class-conscious or not and tries to make them so. The I. W. W. are "uncompromising social idealists," so uncompromising that they cannot take in many members and hence have little practical success as a working organization. Refusing to make contracts, they are unable to secure the closed shop agreements which have proved of such advantage to other unions. The Amalgamated, on the other hand, relies not merely on preaching ideals, but on organizing in effective fashion for bringing about economic changes. In this respect it shows a clearer understanding of economic determinism than does the I. W. W. To quote from an editorial in the *New Textile Worker* by "R. P.," the "Amalgamated will not be swerved from its purpose by any sporadic or *a priori* attempts to take a short cut to the goal. . . . It has ideals in its head but keeps its feet on the earth, being scientifically grounded in economic fact; it is a strong and living link between the present and the future." [10]

[10] *New Textile Worker*, Sept. 25, 1920.

CHAPTER IX

INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM IN VARIOUS OTHER INDUSTRIES

Unions Considered

Industrial unions which are independent of the A. F. of L. have been springing up with considerable rapidity recently. This study cannot attempt to describe them all, but we must mention a few other examples in addition to those already considered. This chapter, therefore, will treat briefly those which have arisen in the metal, food, tobacco, automobile, and railroad industries. Three of them—those in the metal, food, and tobacco industries—were formed within the last year or two, so the record of their accomplishments cannot be long. The American Federation of Railroad Workers and the United Automobile, Aircraft and Vehicle Workers of America, on the other hand, are outgrowths of old A. F. of L. organizations, and have been in existence for a longer period.

The American Railway Union

Various industrial unions have sprung up on the railroads and then died away, and most of these will not even be mentioned here, but before considering the American Federation of Railroad Workers we must say just a word about the American Railway Union which was launched by Eugene Debs in Chicago in 1893. Aiming to include all railroad workers, and even those making cars for use on the roads, this organization spread very rapidly and drew many away from the craft unions. In 1894 it

claimed 150,000 members.[1] The great Pullman strike which was called by this union in 1894 tied up twenty-four roads centering in Chicago and caused much public concern. It was checked by the intervention of the government, which jailed the leaders, and compelled the men to go back to work. The loss of this strike broke the power of the union, and though it lingered along till 1897 it was no longer an important factor. The outlook of this organization was distinctly radical.

The American Federation of Railroad Workers

On the other hand, the American Federation of Railroad Workers has the reputation of being the most conservative of industrial unions. It was organized about 1900 as the International Association of Car Workers, and affiliated with the A. F. of L. In 1911, however, it refused to amalgamate with the Brotherhood of Railway Carmen, as ordered by the A. F. of L., and withdrew from that body. Three years later it extended its jurisdiction to include all classes of railroad workers, and adopted its present name. This action intensified the opposition of the craft unions to the seceding organization, and at the second biennial convention of the Railroad Employees Department a vehement attack was made upon Richardson, its president, charging him with being more in sympathy with the railroad officials than with the workers. It was ordered that no system federation should admit representatives of the American Federation of Railroad Workers, and an official circular was issued denouncing the new organization for aiming to break up the forces of the other unions. The antagonism between the American Federation of Railroad Workers and the craft unions has persisted ever since. Much friction arose in

[1] Commons, and Associates, *History of Labor in the U. S.*, p. 501.

connection with the national agreement of 1919 between the Railroad Employees Department and the railroad managers, covering all the shop crafts. The American Federation of Railroad Workers objected to some of the provisions of this agreement, and while the fight for its retention was still on, it signed a separate contract with one of the railroads doing away with many of the standards which the other unions were trying hard to maintain [2]—much to their indignation.

Spirit of the Organization

The spirit of the organization is indicated by a communication to *The Railroad Worker,* its official organ, which spoke of the faith which the members had in the officials of the Pennsylvania Lines West, who were forced against their will to institute certain wage cuts ordered by the national agreement. "The amicable relations established between the officials and members of the American Federation of Railroad Workers have so cemented the friendship that formerly existed between officials and the men," that it would be difficult to swing any of the workers over to the A. F. of L., the writer says.[3] The "declaration of principles" of the organization contains the following interesting clause: "We contend that it is a sacred principle that union men among all others should set a good example as good and faithful workmen, performing their duties to their employers with honor to themselves and their organizations." The preamble to the constitution states that the interests of all classes of labor are identical, but declares that an "organization based on sound principles and directed by conservative intelligence is the best medium by which we may secure a more

[2] Foster, *The Railroaders' Next Step,* p. 15.
[3] *The Railroad Worker,* May, 1920, p. 29.

equitable share of the wealth we create." The union is distinctly opposed to strikes, considering them "antiquated and obsolete," [4] as one member expresses it, although the constitution provides that they may be called on a two-thirds vote of the members and the consent of the General Executive Board. Although the ultimate goal of industrial unionism is the overthrow of the present system of exploitation, according to one contributor to the official journal, the ballot is declared to be "the weapon of civilization" which is to bring about a better social order. "Organize not to strike but to continue production after the majority have so expressed their will at the ballot box," he urges.[5] This emphasis on political rather than on industrial action is continually given by the union, but care is taken to state that no change in the constitution or form of government of the country is desired. Although political action is approved, the most striking instance of such action for industrial ends on the part of railroad workers furnished by the Plumb Plan campaign has not been supported by the union. In fact the Plumb Plan League has been attacked as merely another means of exploiting the workers by getting money out of them.[6] This opposition is doubtless due to the general feeling of hostility which the American Federation of Railroad Workers cherishes against everything done by the other railroad unions, but it indicates a certain blindness to the necessity for united action if the workers are to accomplish anything by political means.

Membership and Structure

The organization is continually preaching the futility of craft unionism and the necessity of uniting along in-

[4] *The Railroad Worker*, August, 1920, p. 30.
[5] *Ibid.*, December, 1920, p. 30.
[6] *The Railroad Worker*, January, 1920, p. 42.

dustrial lines. Nevertheless it lacks the broad provisions of many industrial unions which ignore differences of race and nationality. It has formed an affiliated body known as the Colored Railroad Workers' Union, but its own membership is limited to white workers, and hot resentment was caused among some of its members by an organizer of the Brotherhood of Railway Carmen who urged the inclusion of negro workers and foreigners in the same organization with other workers.[7] The American Federation of Railroad Workers prides itself on being the only industrial union upon the railroads which has succeeded, but the success which it has attained is small in comparison with that of the craft organizations. It has a membership of between 25,000 and 27,000, found on the Reading, Boston and Maine, New York Central, and various other railroads, according to President Richardson. The members are organized in lodges, sometimes made up of workers from different departments and sometimes from a single department of the railroad industry. If two or more lodges exist on a system they form a railroad workers' system council to insure joint action. Each lodge has an advisory council, which seeks to adjust all difficulties which arise. The initiation fees are kept low in order to encourage workers to join, being $1.50 for those joining within fifteen days after the formation of a lodge, $2 for those coming in in less than a month, and $3 for those joining later. In the matter of low fees the organization is thus following the usual policy of industrial unions.

The United Automobile, Aircraft, and Vehicle Workers of America

The United Automobile, Aircraft, and Vehicle Workers of America is an outgrowth of the Carriage and

[7] *Ibid.*, May, 1920, pp. 26-27.

Wagon Workers' International Union, which was organized in 1891 on an industrial basis. In 1909 its name was changed to the Carriage, Wagon and Automobile Workers' International Union; and in 1918 the present title was adopted, and the jurisdiction extended to include aircraft workers. Until 1918 the union was affiliated with the A. F. of L. According to figures given by its president in the spring of 1921, it has a membership of between 35,000 and 50,000. The largest of its thirty-four locals are in Detroit, New York, and Chicago, and the rest of them are scattered from coast to coast in some twenty-three different states. Its growth has been specially rapid since 1918. In some centers—such as New York, where the forty-four hour week, abolition of piece-work, and a decided increase in wages were won after a long strike in 1919—the union has had great success; but as the industry employs several hundred thousand workers the actual task of organization has only begun. The union includes automobile, aircraft, tire, motor cycle, tractor, carriage, wagon, sleigh, and cutter workers. Besides these, a few other groups which have no direct connection with the industry have been admitted. In Grand Rapids a group of furniture workers asked permission to join, as they thought the form of organization of the union superior to anything else. They were admitted to the Grand Rapids local on condition that they meet separately from the others, and leave in the treasury all money paid in if they decide to withdraw later. In Detroit a group of mattress workers came in on the same conditions, and at the 1920 convention it was reported that the milk wagon drivers of Detroit were considering doing the same thing.[8] A resolution was introduced at the convention forbidding

[8] *Convention Proceedings of the 6th Biennial Convention*, U. A. A. & V. W. of A., September, 1920, p. 31.

the admission of such workers, but it was finally decided to leave the matter to the discretion of the General Executive Board and the local concerned. In including workers so far removed from its natural jurisdiction, the union is doing something which is without precedent and seems to have little logical justification, unless it aims to develop into an all-inclusive organization. The union includes workers in all occupations in the industry, skilled and unskilled, but as the majority of those in the industry are skilled, of course the same thing is true in the union. Certain unskilled workers, such as porters, are not forced to join even when working in union shops, though a few of them do. Sex, color, and nationality furnish no barrier to membership.

Jurisdictional Difficulties

Like all other industrial unions, the organization has been interfered with to a considerable extent by the international craft unions. The continual jurisdictional disputes with the Carpenters and Joiners, the Blacksmiths, the Painters and Decorators, and the Upholsterers retarded the growth of the union, and were the principal cause for its separation from the A. F. of L. An attempt on the part of the Executive Council of the Federation was made in March, 1920, to bring about a conference between these four unions and the automobile workers' organization (which was still addressed by its old name of International Union of Carriage and Wagon Workers) to consider the chartering of certain locals of carriage and wagon workers, but the automobile workers firmly refused to meet with them on the ground that it had always proved impossible to come to any understanding with these Internationals.[9] The union has also had fric-

[9] *Convention Proceedings of the 6th Biennial Convention,* U. A. A. & V. W. of A., September, 1920, p. 38.

tion with the Machinists, who have tried to prejudice the men in garage and repair shops against it on the ground of its radicalism. The A. F. of L. has fought the organization in many ways since its withdrawal. On the other hand, the automobile workers declare in one of their leaflets that the A. F. of L. is "so safe and sane that it leans over backwards in its efforts to protect the employers, and hence has lost all usefulness to workers who really want to elevate their condition from that of wage slavery to industrial freedom. . . . We got out of the A. F. of L. because it was no longer possible to be a real labor union in any sense of the word and stay in it." The general philosophy and tactics of the union will be discussed more fully later in the chapter, in connection with those of the other unions in this group.

The Amalgamated Metal Workers

The Amalgamated Metal Workers of America, the next union we are to consider, was formed by a radical group which seceded from the International Association of Machinists. In November, 1919, the New York district of the I. A. of M. elected officials belonging to this group. In a very short time, however, the Grand Lodge took steps to eliminate them from the organization by bringing certain charges against them, and succeeded in expelling them on the ground that they had misused union funds by paying strike benefits to men who did not belong to the union. This action on the part of the Grand Lodge was interpreted by a large proportion of the membership in the New York district as a direct attack upon the progressive element, and as a result about 50 per cent of the New York members withdrew from the I. A. of M. in March and formed a new organization. Two locals went over in a body; three others lost about 60 per cent

of their members to the new union, and three about 40 per cent, according to Mr. Kelley, secretary-treasurer of the Amalgamated Metal Workers. The expelled officers had not favored a split in the first place, but the progress of events made it seem inevitable. In June, 1920, the Brotherhood of Metal Workers, an independent organization, united with the seceding locals under the name of the Amalgamated Metal Workers of America. This new association was organized on industrial lines and aimed to include eventually all kinds of machinery and metal workers—boilermakers, tinsmiths, blacksmiths, etc. The organization spread rather rapidly, and by the end of 1920 had about 12,000 members, double the number that it had in March. Twenty-seven locals had been formed, divided into seven districts with headquarters in the following cities: New York, Rochester, Newark, Trenton, Bridgeport, Cleveland, and Detroit. Some of the locals, or lodges as they are called, are formed on the nationality basis (Italian, Polish, Hungarian, Spanish, Czecho-Slovak), some on the geographical, and some on the craft basis. Lodges may not be formed on the craft basis unless approved by the district council, however.

Spirit of Democracy

At its first convention held in December, 1920, a constitution was adopted, based on the fundamental principle that the rank and file should control all the activities of the union and providing for a shop steward system in order to ensure this. One of the complaints which the members of the new organization made against the International Association of Machinists was that the Grand Lodge officials had complete control of the policy of the union and ruled its conventions with an iron hand. According to *The Metal Worker,* official organ of the

new body, there were loud murmurings among the rank and file of the machinists, before their convention of September, 1920, demanding the adoption of the industrial form of organization, but the "reactionary machine" killed all measures advocating such a change, as the progressive elements in the union were not sufficiently united to make their will felt.[10] A motion providing that all members of committees be chosen from a slate of nominees put up by the executive officers was condemned by the seceders as a further indication of the impossibility of escaping from official dictation. In their new constitution the Amalgamated Metal Workers aimed to make any such domination by officials impossible. They declared the whole convention of the machinists to be conclusive proof that it was hopeless to expect progress from an A. F. of L. union. This sweeping condemnation is all the more significant when one notes the various steps which have been taken by the machinists in developing the referendum, establishing a cooperative bank, advocating government ownership of railroads, and even extending greetings to Soviet Russia. They are still led by the same president who at the convention of the Railroad Employee Department in 1914 spoke warmly in favor of the development of industrial unionism. The platform of the machinists' union states that one of its aims is to "adapt and carry out a plan of cooperation with other crafts, with the ultimate purpose of amalgamating all metal trades," and a resolution adopted at the 1920 convention advocated a campaign of education to bring about such an amalgamation.[11] The group which seceded from the organization desires something much more radical than the majority of the union are yet ready to adopt, however.

[10] *The Metal Worker*, October, 1920, p. 2.
[11] *Machinists' Monthly Journal*, Vol. 32, p. 1112.

Workers in the Amalgamated Food Industries

The International Workers in the Amalgamated Food Industries was organized in May, 1920, at a joint convention held by the International Federation of Workers in the Hotel, Restaurant, Lunchroom, Club and Catering Industries and a group of Journeymen Bakers and Confectioners. In 1910 an independent organization of hotel workers was formed in New York, but soon died down. In 1916 it was reorganized, however, and held its first convention the following year. In 1918 it extended its jurisdiction to include the restaurant and lunchroom workers and adopted the name of International Federation of Workers in the Hotel, Restaurant, Lunchroom, Club and Catering Industries. Two years later a large New York local of the Journeymen Bakers and Confectioners' Union of the A. F. of L., which had been suspended about seven years before and had remained independent ever since, joined with this Federation in forming the present organization. When the Bakers' local left the A. F. of L. organization it changed from a craft to an industrial basis, and more than doubled its membership as a result of this broadening of its jurisdiction. In March, 1921, there were six locals of bakers in or near New York and one local in Cleveland affiliated with the International Workers in the Amalgamated Food Industries. Branches of hotel workers had been formed in Philadelphia, Atlantic City, Chicago, Boston, and a few other places, but the largest one was in New York City, which had about 5,400 members and had secured the closed shop in several of the large hotels. The workers in the more expensive restaurants are included in the hotel workers' branch, while those in the cheaper ones are organized in the restaurant and lunchroom workers' branch. The new union hopes eventually to combine all

workers who are in any way connected with the handling and serving of food—butchers, bakers, cooks, waiters, kitchen helpers, grocery clerks, delivery boys and drivers, and all others who have to do with foodstuffs, regardless of skill, sex, or race. One or two locals of butchers have been formed already, and a few others which are independently organized are considering joining the new organization. The membership of the union in the spring of 1921 was reported by the general secretary to be over 12,000. It includes Italians, French, Germans, Jews, Poles, Ukranians, and other nationalities, as well as negroes. Separate meetings for these different nationalities are occasionally held. That these different groups do not always get along together with that peace and harmony which might be desired is indicated by a correspondent in the official journal who complains of the prejudices and friction that exist among them. A new spirit of brotherhood and internationalism, in place of the present scrabble for money and personal advantage, seems to him very necessary.[12] The union has of course come into conflict with the A. F. of L., which has organized cooks and waiters and certain other types of food workers into separate craft unions to some extent, and its opposition has caused some branches of the organization a hard struggle. The Restaurant and Lunchroom Workers of the Amalgamated Food Industries in New York claim that the A. F. of L. organization has deliberately offered its members to the bosses for a lower wage in order to displace the members of its rival, and hence has a much larger following in the cheap restaurants than has the newer union.[13] On the other hand, some locals have broken away from the A. F. of L. organizations and joined the Workers in the Amalgamated Food Industries.

[12] *Free Voice*, Mar. 15, 1921.
[13] *Ibid.*, Feb. 1, 1921.

The Amalgamated Tobacco Workers

The last union which we are to consider in this group —the youngest and the smallest of them—is the Amalgamated Tobacco Workers of America, which was formed in December, 1920. The serious depression in the industry, and the lockout in New York which began early in that winter, have made the task of organization very difficult, and many who joined the union in the first place have been forced to drop out, so the present membership figures give little indication of the potential strength of the new body. In March, 1921, the business agent of the New York local reported that the organization had about 2,000 members in New York, and 4,000 in the whole country, distributed in ten locals. Two months later he admitted a decrease of over a thousand in the New York membership, due to the lack of work, but expressed confidence that rapid growth would follow an improvement in industrial conditions. The significance of this body lies not in its size but in its ideals and aims. It resulted from the merging of various groups, some of which had seceded from the Cigar Makers' International Union of the A. F. of L., and some of which had been independent. Most important of these groups was the Shop Chairmen's Institution of Greater New York and Vicinity, which was formed after the general strike in the industry in 1919, to protect the interests of all cigar workers regardless of affiliation. In this strike, which was a spontaneous rank and file movement, members of the C. M. I. U. had gone out with the others, but the great mass of the strikers were unorganized workers. The Shop Chairmen's Institution, which was largely made up of workers who had not previously been organized, declared repeatedly that it was not formed to fight the C. M. I. U., but to unite all workers in the industry on a shop

basis and put entire control of shop affairs in the hands of the rank and file. Many of its members at first wanted the organization to become a part of the C. M. I. U., but such disappointment was felt over what they considered the lack of liberalism shown at the 1920 convention of that union that they decided it was useless to affiliate with such a reactionary body.

Desire for New Organization

In November, 1920, a manifesto was issued by the Shop Chairmen's Institution, summoning cigar workers from all over the country to meet in convention early in December to consider the problem of organizing the masses of unorganized workers in the industry. This manifesto pointed out that only a small proportion of the cigar workers in the country were organized, even after forty years of effort on the part of the C. M. I. U., and declared that this was largely due to the failure to realize the significance of the introduction of machinery into the trade. "Just because we have stubbornly clung to the conservative idea in trying to stave off machinery, considering ourselves aristocrats of the trade, we have failed to organize the integral elements in our industry, the strippers, binders, casers, selectors, etc.—workers that are essential in the composition of a really effective industrial organization." The introduction of machinery has caused the flocking of thousands of new workers into the trade, and with this influx the percentage of organized workers in the industry has grown smaller—because of the indifference of the C. M. I. U. officials toward them, the shop chairman declared.[14] When the union was

[14] *The Cigar Worker* (organ of the Shop Chairmen's Institution), Nov. 6, 1920, p. 3.

organized hand-work was the prevailing system in the industry, though molds were just beginning to be used. Since then the use of machines has increased steadily, resulting in the use of cheap unskilled labor, a large proportion of which is that of women. The union has organized a large majority of the hand workers and mold workers, but the mass of the bunch breakers, rollers, and packers are non-union.[15] The C. M. I. U. claims jurisdiction over all persons in the cigar and tobacco industry who are not entitled to join other A. F. of L. unions, but by the admission of its own president it has not enrolled much more than one-third of them—whether through indifference or through the inherent difficulties of the situation, it is hard to say. The shop chairmen criticized it not only for failing to organize the great mass of workers in the industry, but also for paying more attention to maintaining sick and death benefits than to improving working conditions. The union had thus become "a lifeless organization for the purpose of burying its dead and not to uplift the living in the industry," the manifesto declared. The insurgent group claimed that these sick and death benefits were a serious menace to the welfare of the organization, as the officials were so eager to maintain adequate funds for such purposes that they were afraid of having to pay for strikes and hence discouraged all efforts for economic betterment. As a matter of fact the C. M. I. U. spent nearly $200,000 more for its sick and death benefits during 1919 than for its strike activities,[16] so there may be some cause for this attitude on the part of the shop chairmen.

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[15] *The Cigar Makers' Official Journal* (organ of the C. M. I. U.), April, 1920, Report of Pres. Perkins.

[16] *Cigar Makers' Official Journal,* November, 1920.

Forming of the Amalgamated Tobacco Workers

At the convention called by the Shop Chairmen's Institution in December, which was attended by delegates from Chicago, Philadelphia, Reading, Porto Rico, and a few other places where locals had already seceded from the C. M. I. U., as well as from New York, a new organization known as the Amalgamated Tobacco Workers of America was born. To be sure the name had previously been taken by a Pennsylvania local which had withdrawn from the C. M. I. U., but with the merging of the different groups of "progressives" it was adopted by the united body. The official journal of the C. M. I. U. reported that the convention ended in a "blaze of confusion" after three days of dissension. It is undoubtedly true that there was considerable difference of opinion manifested by the delegates, both as to the question of forming a new organization and as to the constitution that was to be adopted, but this characterization seems somewhat of an exaggeration. A few articles of the proposed constitution were adopted, as well as various resolutions, but it was decided on the fourth day to appoint a provisional committee of five for a term of two months to work out further details of the constitution and to carry on the preliminary work of organization. The opposition to the proposed plan of organization had come largely from the Spanish delegates, who felt the informal Shop Chairmen's Institution was all that was necessary. A referendum which was held somewhat later resulted in the adoption of the proposed constitution and the election of a staff of national officers. The new organization aims to include not merely cigar, cigarette, and stogie makers, and others who are claimed by the C. M. I. U., but also box makers, clerks in cigar stores, and office help. In a separate department of the union

are to be all tobacco workers, including those in the fields and warehouses (many of whom are now claimed by the International Tobacco Workers' Union of the A. F. of L.), and all engineers, firemen, and other workers connected with the preparation of tobacco. All workers in the industry in one place are organized in the same local. The statement of aims of the union includes the following provision: "Shop unity being necessary to protect the interests of the workers, we will allow paid-up members of other unions to work in shops controlled by our members as long as they agree to uphold the Bill of Rights and shop conditions" which have been established. The union is thus trying to carry out the original principles of the Shop Chairmen's Institution which put greater emphasis upon cooperation in the shop than upon national affiliation.

Philosophy of the Unions

Having briefly sketched the history of these industrial unions we must now consider their characteristics in somewhat greater detail. As the last four—those in the automobile, metal, food, and tobacco industries—are very similar in structure and philosophy, it seems wise to treat them as a group, omitting the American Federation of Railroad Workers from further discussion. All four of them are distinctly class conscious. Their preambles emphasize the struggle between the small non-producing class which is able to amass millions and the large producing class of workers—the "only useful class in society" —which can eke out only a bare existence. There can be no peace in industry as long as this system of distribution exists, the auto workers maintain. The preamble of the Amalgamated Tobacco Workers states:

It is through the direct efforts of the workers themselves, economically and politically united as a class, conscious of its rights, aware of its strength, determined to resist wrong at every step, that the workers can achieve their own emancipation. That can only be done by an organization formed in such a way that all the members in the tobacco industry, if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one the concern of all.

The metal workers declare: "We must abolish the profit system and establish instead a social system wherein the industries shall be owned and controlled by those who toil, and wherein no man shall live by the exploitation of another." To that end the workers must be educated as to the causes of the existing evils of society, so that they may "develop the necessary strength to enforce the principle of 'All Power to the Workers.'" The metal workers therefore pledge themselves to work for the industrial emancipation of the workers so that they may receive the full product of their labor. The building up of a powerful industrial union is to be the means of gaining not only minor benefits such as equal pay for equal work, and hours that are as short as is "consistent with the necessities of production," but also the ultimate ownership of industry by the working class. The metal workers hold that although the liberation of the workers can only be achieved by abolishing the capitalist system and establishing "a government of the workers by the workers, and for the workers," they have no faith in the method of political action for bringing it about. Labor must be educated to see that the ballot "is the capitalists' tool by which they rule and control the workers, using it as a means of maintaining themselves in power; and that it may be used by the workers at this time only as a means of propaganda and not as a means of liberating themselves from capitalist bondage." The International

Workers in the Amalgamated Food Industries point out the sharp antagonism in interest between the owners of industry and the workers, and declare that "all inventions instead of being used to lighten the burden of the laboring masses, as they would be if they were in the hands of the working class, are used by the capitalist class to intensify the exploitation of the working class." Therefore the food workers seek by means of their industrial union to "cooperate with all other workers who struggle for the abolition of the wage system and the complete emancipation of labor."

Attitude toward Agreements with Employers

The radical philosophy of these unions manifests itself to some extent in their tactics as well as in their preambles. Both the food workers and the tobacco workers have constitutional provisions forbidding the signing of contracts with employers. The automobile workers at their last convention (in September, 1920) passed a resolution stating that "we go on record as being opposed to signed agreements with employers and advise local unions against the same wherever possible." Their constitution still permits such agreements, however, provided they are first submitted to the General Executive Board for endorsement. The Board may modify them if it considers their provisions inopportune or unsatisfactory. Union shop agreements are still made by some of the smaller locals, where custom or special work is the rule, where repair work predominates, or where the employer wishes to use the union label, but the general policy of the union is to discourage them. The reason for this, according to President Logan, is that the agreement has been found to be "detrimental to the morale of the organization, inasmuch as it makes the workers depend more

or less upon the employer to compel those who are hired to join the organization; or in other words, it has a tendency to influence the workers to lean upon the agreement as a crutch and thereby spoil their self-reliance." Another reason for this policy is that with changing conditions, a fixed contract may cause the workers to remain under conditions which they consider unjust. At the convention one delegate declared that the employer might break an agreement whenever he saw fit, but if the workers did so the press would use the fact as propaganda against the union. If the union was strong enough, an agreement was unnecessary.

Attempted Substitutes for Strikes

In spite of their radical preamble and their opposition to signed agreements, the Automobile, Aircraft, and Vehicle Workers believe in arbitration and conciliation, and seek to substitute them for strikes as a method of settling disputes. If any contracts are made, the constitution requires that they contain a clause providing for arbitration. Every possible means must be taken to avoid strikes. The General Executive Board must be notified of any new demands, or any decision on the part of a local to resist reductions in wages or lowering of working standards, before any action is taken. If a strike seems likely to occur, the president must personally or by proxy endeavor to adjust the difficulty. No local may take part in a sympathetic strike till after a thorough investigation has been made by the General Executive Board, and its sanction given; and no financial support may be given to any strike which has not been endorsed by the Board. As in other unions, however, unauthorized strikes occasionally take place. At the last convention one of the organizers reported such a strike on the part of a shop unit in Cleve-

land, which was supported by the local union without referring the case to the general officers, on the ground that the local did not need any general president or organizer to tell it what to do or what not to do. In spite of this unconstitutional proceeding, the national organizer helped with the conduct of the strike after it had begun.

Conflicting Tendencies

There is evidently an element in the organization which has been urging locals to "go it alone" in disregard of the advice of the higher officials. This fact, combined with the habit of viewing industrial matters from a narrow local standpoint, has worked against the success of the organization in some cases. Several reasons for this tendency were given by Organizer Blumenberg at the 1920 convention. In the first place, the union's power of assimilation had not kept pace with its growth, and hence there were divergent elements within it. On the one hand, there was a spirit of individualism developed by the nature of piece-work conditions in the industry which made it difficult to foster the idea of collective action. On the other hand, certain members of disrupted propaganda organizations, full of zeal but without much sense of responsibility, had entered into the union and were doing harm. Progressive unions like that of the automobile workers should not try to make advances too far in the lead of the general army of labor, or model their tactics after those that have proved successful in Europe, without regard for the differences in psychology and industrial development, declared Mr. Blumenberg—though he admitted that radicals when guided by practical considerations had done much to advance the interests of the union. Although the standard of intelligence in the union was comparatively high, there was need for more educa-

tion among the members in regard to the labor movement and the whole industrial system so that there might be fewer ill-advised strikes and greater chance of winning those actually undertaken, he maintained.[17]

Radicalism Tempered by Common Sense

That the radical philosophy of the auto workers' union is mixed with considerable common sense is also indicated by President Logan's report of a certain strike settlement which he said was hindered by the "unreasonableness of one or two who seemed to be under the impression that they were fighting a revolution for the abolition of capitalism instead of fighting for the reinstatement of three discharged members."[18] In a leaflet circulated by the union President Logan says:

> We do not claim that we are going to remodel society or usher in the dawn of the cooperative commonwealth. We have no social revolution ready to hand the worker for a $5 initiation fee and a few months' dues. We are an organization of all the workers in the automobile, aircraft and vehicle industry in one solid, compact and powerful organization. We aim to teach these workers how to act collectively and to drill them in the tactics and generalship of the Industrial Labor Movement. . . . We believe that education is the right road to industrial freedom. . . . We know that the workers will never know how to manage the state even if they should gain that responsibility through political action, until they learn how to act collectively in getting some of their immediate needs satisfied.

The Amalgamated Tobacco Workers also make some modifications of the radical class antagonism which they profess. At their first convention the chairman stated that, although organizing along the lines of the class struggle,

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[17] *Convention Proceedings of the 6th Biennial Convention,* U. A. A. & V. W., September, 1920, p. 15.

[18] *Ibid.,* p. 17.

they "must not neglect the necessity of friendly intercourse with the employers in the shop." The aims of the union do not necessarily impair the interest of the employers "to the extent of preventing them from remaining in business," the tobacco workers magnanimously admit![19]

The Basis of Organization

All of these four unions are organized with the shop as the basic unit. This form of organization has grown up because of the unwieldiness of large locals in which the individual is completely lost. The newer unionism seeks, as has already been said, to place the control of union affairs as far as possible in the hands of the rank and file, and in order to facilitate this it is necessary to have groups which are small enough and closely enough united to make democratic discussion possible. Meetings of all workers in a shop are held at least once a month to consider problems pertaining to that particular group. The Detroit local of the automobile workers' union provides that in case a firm has several plants in the city, all workers in these plants shall belong to the same shop unit, which may have subdivisions if necessary. It also provides for a "miscellaneous shop unit," including those working in various plants where too few members exist to form a unit of their own. In general, however, the shop organization includes simply the workers in one establishment. In each one is a shop committee and a chairman who are especially responsible for the settlement of grievances and promotion of the welfare of the workers. The shop committees are made up of delegates from the different departments of the industry, as a rule. The automobile workers allow one representative for each ten

[19] *The Amalgamated Tobacco Worker*, Dec. 18, 1920.

members, but the metal and food workers have only one delegate from each department, unless there are less than three departments in the establishment. The automobile and food workers specify that committee members shall be elected for a term of three months.

Constitution of the Metal Workers' Union

The chairman and secretary of the metal workers' shop committees are known as shop stewards and function much as do the shop stewards of England. They meet in both local and district councils. The chief seat of power in the organization lies in the district councils of these unpaid shop stewards which have both legislative and executive control over their own districts. They are composed of all shop stewards and two delegates from each lodge in the city, or other geographical division which is designated as a district. Any strike which is likely to involve more than one shop must be brought before the district council. Individual shop strikes are discouraged, though they may be called by a two-thirds vote of the members concerned if necessary. All agreements or settlements of strikes must be ratified by the members in the shops involved. If at any time a strike is called by the majority of the workers in a shop where the members of the Amalgamated Metal Workers are in the minority, the union members are to go out with the others, thus showing their solidarity with all metal workers. Beside the shop units, local councils, and district councils, there are also seven regional councils, with three delegates from each district, meeting semi-annually to settle disputes which may be referred to them. The National Executive Committee, which carries on organization and propaganda work, is composed of one member from each region. It appoints its own salaried officers, who are paid no more

than the men they represent. There is also a National Council made up of three members from each region, which convenes on order of the National Executive Committee or written request of three regions. This National Council appoints the national secretary-treasurer, and decides all matters of moment between conventions that are not settled by the National Executive Committee. The highest authority in the union is of course the convention, which is held annually, or oftener if demanded by a referendum vote of the members. Amendments to the constitution, which are endorsed by 25 per cent of the affiliated lodges or councils, may be submitted to referendum vote at any time. In some respects this constitution is well adapted for democratic government, but in others it is not. The lack of direct popular election of the national officials is a weakness—though a less serious one than if those officials were given greater power. The granting of such a large amount of power to the councils of shop stewards who are very close to the rank and file is, however, a decided step in the direction of real democracy in the union.

Constitution of the Automobile Workers' Union

The automobile workers have adopted the shop unit system in Detroit, New York, and Chicago, and recommend it elsewhere, though they have not yet tried it in smaller locals. The governing body is called the Board of Shop Chairmen in New York and the Board of Administration in Detroit. The constitution of the Detroit local provides that this board shall consist of the secretaries and chairmen of the shop units, the shop conference committees which have one representative from each department, and the executive board, grievance committee, and elected officials of the local. No shop unit

can expect the support of the local in any strike unless it has first received the sanction of the Board of Administration. All action affecting other shop units or the policy of the local as a whole must also receive the sanction of the local before being undertaken by any shop. In general a two-thirds vote of those at a meeting attended by at least two-thirds of the members of a shop unit is necessary for calling a strike, but if an employer demands that any worker withdraw from the organization or sign an individual contract the local considers that a lockout has been declared, and all the members cease work at once. The union has an interesting provision that no striker may accept work anywhere without permission of the strike relief committee. All available jobs must be reported to this committee and distributed among those who need them most. This is a method of expressing the spirit of brotherhood which is rather rare. More power over strikes and other matters is put in the hands of the General Executive Board and the three other general officers than is given to the national officers of the metal workers. The procedure of the general officers when a strike is imminent has already been noted. All officers are elected at the biennial convention from among the delegates. The final authority in the union is really the general membership, however, for all questions must be submitted to referendum vote if so demanded by five locals (in different cities) or by four members of the General Executive Board. The automobile workers allow a free interchange of membership cards with other unions, except where the initiation fee of the union from which the applicant wishes to be tranferred is less than their own, in which case he must pay the difference between them. The usual difficulty in transferring from one craft union to another is strongly condemned by the industrial

unionists, and this provision is quite in keeping with their spirit. The provision of both the automobile and the tobacco workers that in slack seasons all workers shall be given work in rotation, so that none of them are laid off for more than a few days at a time, is also typical of the new unionism.

Constitution of the Food Workers' Union

Although the Workers in the Amalgamated Food Industries emphasize the shop committees and the monthly shop meetings, they discourage single shop strikes. Such strikes may only be allowed when proprietors refuse to carry out union conditions which have already been established. New demands on houses which recognize the union may only be presented by the branch or local. (The term "local" is used only by the bakers. Henceforth the word "branch" will be used in this chapter for all local bodies of food workers.) When two or more establishments are owned by the same firm, all workers in those establishments must meet together when any difficulty arises needing combined action in defense of workers in any one of them. All questions of tactics in time of strike are to be decided by the workers involved without interference from anyone else. Each branch has a permanent fund for strikes which it expends as it sees fit. The branches are given a large degree of independence in regard to matters affecting the workers under their jurisdiction. The Central Executive Board, which has representatives from all the branches in proportion to their membership, controls matters of general interest to the organization, decides jurisdictional disputes, and attends to certain routine matters, but has much less power than the executive boards of most national unions. The four paid officials of the central organization, the secretary-

treasurer, editor, and two general organizers, are nominated and elected by the membership at large, instead of by the convention. In this union, as in all the other new industrial unions, there is a great desire to avoid control by a clique of officials. For this reason, no one is eligible to the convention who has been a paid official during the preceding two months. The Amalgamated Metal Workers at their first convention took a similar stand by allowing national and district officers a seat but no vote, excluding them from all committees, and denying them the right to act in any official capacity in the convention. In order to prevent collusion between union leaders and employers, the constitution of the food workers' union states that no official or member of the union shall seek a private interview with an employer during a strike. The metal workers seek a similar safeguard by providing that no paid representative of the organization may attempt any negotiations with an employer without the presence of one of the shop stewards.

Constitution of the Tobacco Workers' Union

The Amalgamated Tobacco Workers, like the Workers in the Amalgamated Food Industries, leave the locals very free to manage their own affairs. They may call strikes whenever their members vote for such action, and the central organization guarantees moral and financial support to the extent of its ability. The shop chairmen, who hold weekly meetings with such other representatives as the shops consider it necessary to elect, deal with all matters concerning the interests of the tobacco workers in their locality, but all questions of importance must be referred to the local union membership for final decision. Any local may propose an amendment to the national constitution at any time, and

if endorsed by two other locals this amendment must be submitted to referendum vote, as must all decisions of the annual convention. The general officers of the union, who are nominated by the convention and elected by the whole membership, serve for one year and may not hold office for more than two consecutive terms. This provision is intended to prevent that domination of the organization by one strong personality, or by a clique of officials, which is characteristic of many of the older unions. The secretary-treasurer and organizer are the only paid officials of the central organization. In order that free expression may be given to all opinions, members may publish in the union journal any articles which they desire, without mutilation or comment from the editor. In spite of these efforts to prevent the national officials from having too much power, the tobacco workers turn over to the central organization a much larger proportion of the money received from dues than do the other unions in this group. From 50 to 70 per cent of their dues go to the central office, whereas the food workers turn over only 15 per cent, the metal workers 20 per cent, and the automobile workers less than 50 per cent. In general the relative strength of the national organization in comparison with the local is indicated by the amount of money which it allows the local group to retain for its own purposes, but in this case the criterion does not appear to be a very accurate one. All of these unions follow the usual policy of industrial unions in keeping initiation fees and dues low. The fees run from $2 to $5 (though the automobile workers set $5 as the minimum). Dues are from $1 to $1.50 a month, except in the case of the automobile workers who allow the locals to set a higher amount if they see fit.

Summary

In summing up briefly, we may say that these four industrial unions, of food, tobacco, metal, and automobile workers, look forward definitely and hopefully to the end of the capitalist system and the coming of a better social order in which the workers shall receive the full value of all which they produce. Their belief in the class struggle influences the tactics of some of them to the extent of refusing to make definite contracts with employers, but nevertheless their efforts are largely directed toward securing the same immediate improvements in their condition which are sought by other unions. The main practical difference between them and most of the A. F. of L. unions lies in the greater degree of democracy in the conduct of union affairs which characterizes them, and in the all-inclusive spirit which raises no barriers in the way of high initiation fees and dues, and reaches out to all workers in the industry regardless of race, nationality, sex, or craft.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

Class Consciousness

Now that we have come to the end of our survey, we must ask ourselves what it has taught us of the psychology of the workers and the direction in which organized labor is moving. In our analysis of the details of structure and policy it has been easy to lose sight of the broad outlines of industrial unionism. We must now try to sum up the essential characteristics of these various bodies and come to some general conclusions as to the value of the type of organization which we have been describing.

The outstanding feature of these industrial unions is their class consciousness. To be sure, there are a few unions claiming jurisdiction over all who work in their industries which have relatively little of it, and in practically all of the industrial unions there are many individuals who do not see far beyond the small group with which they are immediately associated, but in general we may say that industrial unions uphold the principle that all members of the working class, no matter what their occupation or degree of skill, have interests in common and must work for the coming of a better day for all the workers. Some organizations such as the Industrial Workers of the World and the One Big Union seek to unite all types of workers in one great organization, believing that in no other way can the solidarity of labor be adequately expressed. Others hold that a sense of solidarity can best be developed and the

interests of the workers furthered by organizing simply by industries, with the hope that in the future these industrial groups may draw closer together and form an inter-industrial alliance of some sort.

Is this class consciousness socially desirable or not? The "average citizen" who is unconnected with the labor movement will probably answer quickly in the negative. To him the term "class consciousness" conveys nothing but an idea of hatred between classes and bitter industrial struggle. It is an anti-social conception, he declares, and should be combated by all possible means. In indignantly condemning it, he contrasts it with the attitude of one who seeks to serve society as a whole, rather than any one class, and adjures the laborer to do his work faithfully and maintain harmonious relations with his employer in order that nothing may interfere with the peace and comfort of the general public. In so doing, the average citizen fails to realize that the alternative to class consciousness on the part of the worker is less likely to be devotion to the welfare of such an all-inclusive group as the whole of society than devotion to his own interests alone. When a worker first comes in touch with the labor movement and begins to realize that his welfare is bound up with that of his fellows, he experiences a great emancipation from a narrow circle of interests. The first group with which he feels community of interest is likely to be that with which he is working, at the same craft or in the same shop. As his horizon widens his loyalty extends naturally to all who are working in the same industry with him, and he is ready to subordinate his own immediate advantage and even that of his craft or shop to that of the whole industrial group. As horizons widen still further and the sense of solidarity develops, loyalty to the whole working class grows out of, though does not supplant, loyalty to

his own industrial union, and he feels all the passionate ardor of devotion to a great cause when he enlists in a struggle for the welfare of his class. The process which has taken place has thus been primarily a socializing one. With each enlargement of the group which has claimed his loyalty, the worker's personality has expanded and his interests have broadened. The sense of solidarity ultimately reaches out beyond national boundaries to embrace the working class in all countries, and thus becomes a powerful force making for world brotherhood. If it is desirable to make as large as possible the group with which an individual is able to feel a "consciousness of kind," this development of class solidarity should be recognized as an invaluable factor in social education.

Theory of the Class Struggle

Even if it be granted that class consciousness may make a workèr in some respects a more social being than he would be if he had no loyalties outside of his immediate family circle, the critic replies, the fact remains that with the development of such consciousness comes an increase in antagonism between the employing and the working classes, and the goal of the socializing process, which must be nothing less than harmonious cooperation between all groups in society, is thus made immeasurably remote. The doctrine of the class struggle which is a corollary of the idea of class consciousness, he declares, makes any real cooperation or harmony between employer and employee impossible, and thus injects a poison into the whole social system. If the labor leaders who talk about the class struggle were creating that struggle and seeking to perpetuate it, there would be much justice in this criticism. The aim of the class conscious industrial unions, however, is to reach the point where the struggle between owner

and worker which has gone on for generations may cease because owner and worker have become one. The social group to which loyalty goes out will then be expanded to include all who are in any way productive, whether by hand or brain, and the non-productive members of society will be reduced to the smallest possible number, if not wholly eliminated. By pointing out the existence of a class struggle, these unions think that they are doing more to put an end to it than by simply ignoring it.

Causes of Struggle

The theory of the class struggle is often expressed in a way which is so crude and inaccurate as to merit the criticism which is heaped upon it. When the Industrial Workers of the World declare that the worker and the employer have nothing in common, they ignore certain definite facts. For instance, the greater the amount that is produced, the more of the good things of life there are to distribute among those who take part in production; and the more efficiently the industry is run, the less human effort is wasted in making those good things. Nevertheless, it is apparent that a struggle over the division of the product exists and will continue to exist until some principle which will be recognized as just by all concerned is discovered for determining the division of the product. At present no such principle appears to be in operation. The relative share of the total product which the different groups receive seems to be determined by the degree of their self-assertion, rather than by the service which they render to the industry and thus to society. So long as large incomes go to absentee owners who do not contribute any direct personal service, either by way of management or actual labor, the workers will continue to believe that industry can afford to pay more

to those who do the work and that no valid answer can be given to the demand for higher wages. As Mr. Tawney expresses it in his book on *The Acquisitive Society,* "the naive complaint that workmen are never satisfied is therefore strictly true. It is true not only of workmen but of all classes in a society which conducts its affairs on the principle that wealth instead of being proportioned to function belongs to those who can get it."[1] For this reason the industrial unionists maintain that the motive of service must be substituted for the motive of profit if there is to be any end to the class struggle; and therefore those who are contributing no actual service must be eliminated from industry.

It is not merely the lack of a just principle for dividing the product that causes a struggle between classes. Quite as important is the demand of the workers for an increasing measure of control over the conditions under which they labor, and the reluctance of the employers to allow any interference with the way they run "their" business. The whole history of the labor movement is a record of the struggle to wrest control of working conditions out of the hands of the employing class and to get greater security for the workers. On the one hand, employers have felt that their factories and workshops were their own to manage as they saw fit, and have yielded to the demand of their workers for a voice in determining hours and wages and other matters only when forced to do so. On the other hand, the workers have fought steadily against autocratic control and demanded a more democratic system of management and a more secure tenure of their positions. In this struggle for industrial democracy all unions, whether radical or conservative, have had a share, and as Mr. Tannenbaum has

[1] Tawney, *The Acquisitive Society,* New York, 1920, p. 43.

pointed out in his book on *The Labor Movement,* in this sense they have all been revolutionary. It is the class conscious unions, however, which have recognized whither the activities of all organized labor are tending—the management of industry by all those directly engaged in it—and are able to interpret this tendency to the rest of the workers and increase the idealism and the rapidity of the movement.

Methods of Bringing about Democratic Ownership and Control

We cannot here give any adequate consideration to the various methods suggested for substituting democratic ownership and control for the present capitalist system. The I. W. W. have prophesied a general strike which will accompany the final collapse of capitalism, and are beginning to study the technical problems which must be met when the organized workers shall undertake the management of industry. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the other clothing unions are experimenting with cooperative enterprises, with the hope that they may educate the workers in the principles of management and pave the way for an order of society where the workers shall own and operate all industry. The United Mine Workers are urging the elimination of private ownership of the mines by means of government purchase, and their management by a board on which the worker shall have equal representation with other factors. The method of the general strike and forcible seizure of all industry at once is recognized as visionary and impracticable by most labor leaders, as well as by impartial students of the question. The method of bringing about the new industrial order by means of establishing cooperative enterprises gives more promise of success. Nevertheless there

are various problems to be solved in connection with that. As soon as such cooperative establishments become numerous enough to threaten seriously the success of private enterprise, the banks and commercial organizations will probably make it difficult for them to get credit or secure raw materials and market their products on as favorable terms as those given to private business. The development of cooperative enterprises in many industries at the same time and the extension of cooperation to the realm of credit will help to mitigate these difficulties, but it is doubtful if the new industrial order could be brought about wholly in this way. The government purchase of basic industries such as railroads, steel plants, and mines—perhaps by issuing notes on which the interest should be paid out of future profits—and their democratic management by those engaged in these industries, would probably be a necessary transition step toward the new social system that the industrial unionists desire. When the most important industries had thus been taken out of private hands, the development of cooperation in other trades would prove less difficult.

Would an Industry Run by the Workers Be Efficient?

The question of efficiency in an industry run by the workers is of course an important one. To many it appears that the workers in demanding control of production are preparing for the destruction of industry and their own suicide. The results of political democracy, say those who hold this view, have not been so encouraging as to give us much assurance that democracy in industry will secure the efficient production that is necessary to supply the needs of the world. On the other hand, the recent investigation of the committee of the Federated American Engineering Societies appointed by Mr. Hoover

to study industrial waste, shows that the present capitalist system is far from being the efficient instrument that had been supposed. One of the most important elements in production is the psychological attitude of those engaged in it. So long as the workers feel that the industry does not belong to them in any sense and that they have no real share in its control, they are not likely to feel any great responsibility for the efficiency of the industry. When any extra exertion on their part results chiefly in additional dividends to the stockholders, and may bring about future unemployment for themselves if more is produced than can be disposed of at a profit, the general sentiment of the workers is not likely to be in favor of extra exertion. A system which would carry on industry primarily for the benefit of the community rather than for private profit, and would make each worker feel that he had a just share in the total product and could help determine the conditions under which it was produced, would doubtless furnish incentives which are weak or wholly lacking under the present system. The sentiment of the group to which the worker professed loyalty would thus be in favor of efficient production instead of against it, and what has been called the "instinct of workmanship" would have fuller play than it does at present.

All of the industrial unions, including the I. W. W., recognize that a long period of preparation is necessary before the workers will be ready for the control of production, and some of them are definitely trying to educate their members so that they may have an intelligent understanding of industrial processes. There are men of great ability even in the labor movement who would probably make efficient managers, but the success of an industry where the whole group of workers had a voice in determining conditions would depend to great extent on the intel-

ligent interest which the rank and file had in the industry. The more progressive labor leaders who look forward to the control of industry by the workers in the future are now recognizing the necessity of enlisting the cooperation of technical experts who will work out the details of production management, subject to general principles laid down by the whole body of those who work by hand or brain. These experts would be responsible to the workers, rather than to absentee shareholders. There are many problems to be solved in connection with the relation of such experts to the rank and file, but it is a hopeful sign that labor is coming to realize that the presence of such men in an industry is not incompatible with industrial democracy. It seems quite possible that the workers—using the term in a sense broad enough to include all who contribute to the industry by either hand or brain—may develop sufficient understanding of the requirements of production to choose the right men to direct them, and to lay down general principles to be carried out by these men, without any loss of efficiency. Certain details in regard to working conditions might also be decided by direct vote of the entire labor force in a shop, but in all probability many matters in regard to production would need to remain in the hands of the highly trained managers who would be responsible not merely to those in their own shops but to the whole body of workers in the industry, and, in the case of government-owned industries, to the community at large.

Effect of Radical Philosophy on Attitude toward Agreements

We must consider not merely the ultimate hopes of these various unions but also their immediate policies, and determine to what extent their radical philosophy affects

those policies. The I. W. W., the Food Workers, and the Tobacco Workers express their belief in the class struggle by refusing to sign agreements with employers for any definite length of time, and the Automobile Workers discourage such contracts just as far as possible. The reason for this, as has been pointed out, is that these unions have felt that time agreements prevent their taking advantage of strategic moments for improving their condition and from coming to the assistance of other workers who are in need of aid. On the other hand, the garment unions and the Amalgamated Textile Workers, though announcing as definitely as do those other unions their conviction that a class struggle exists, and their expectation that the organized working class will eventually take over the entire system of production, hold that definite agreements with employers are an essential part of the process of preparing for the new day. The system of industrial government which the Amalgamated Clothing Workers has worked out is not only giving a substantial measure of security to the workers in the present but is also educating them in regard to the manifold problems which must arise in the management of any industry and thus helping to prepare them for a larger degree of responsibility for production. By cooperating with employers as far as cooperation seems possible, they are narrowing the field of conflict and saving their strength for times when the clash in interests is so fundamental as to make a struggle inevitable.

Collective agreements have been made by conservative craft unions for many years, but they differ from those of the industrial unions, in that they apply to only a portion of the workers in any industry instead of covering them all. They thus make it possible for employers to prevent united action by having the contracts of different groups

expire at different times. Agreements of the sort made by the Ladies' Garment Workers, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, and the silk ribbon workers of the Amalgamated Textile Workers of course obviate this difficulty and also, because of their flexibility, the objection that time agreements make no allowance for changing conditions. The United Mine Workers and the United Brewery Workmen, also, have from the beginning established joint contracts wherever possible, and so has the Western Federation of Miners since 1912. The U. M. W. has, to be sure, never professed a radical philosophy, but the U. B. W. formed contracts even in its most radical days. We may conclude, therefore, that while there is difference of opinion among industrial unions as to the advisability of signing agreements with employers, a class conscious philosophy in no way necessitates an unwillingness to do so.

Attitude of Industrial Unions toward Efficiency under Present System

Do radical theories make a unionist a less efficient and satisfactory workman under the present capitalist system? The Industrial Worker of the World has been denounced bitterly for his alleged sabotage, and it is assumed that because his organization has often preached the "conscientious withdrawal of efficiency" that he is a much greater sinner in this respect than other workers. As a matter of fact there is considerable of this slackening of efficiency among all groups of workers, regardless of whether they are ranked as radical or conservative, or are organized or unorganized, and it is one of the symptoms of an unwholesome condition in industry. The I. W. W., as has already been pointed out, is now beginning to consider carefully the whole problem of industrial manage-

ment and trying to work out methods for carrying on production more efficiently than has yet been done under the capitalist system. To be sure the new interest in production is directed toward the future and will not necessarily influence the immediate tactics of the average I. W. W. member, but the shift in emphasis from destructive to constructive action may do something to stimulate better workmanship in the present. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers and to some extent the Ladies' Garment Workers and the Cap Makers, have taken a stand far in advance of the ordinary craft union by recognizing their share of responsibility for the successful operation of industry. Their attempt to increase efficiency by the joint fixing of standards of output shows an intelligent and progressive attitude toward the whole problem of production. Much more attention needs to be given to the matter, however, on the part of industrial unions as well as craft unions. Although not enough evidence on this point is yet available to lead to any definite conclusions, there is some reason for thinking that as a belief in the necessity of training the workers for future management of industry spreads, there will be less use of methods that tend to unfit them for successful carrying on of production by breaking down standards of workmanship.

Conflicting Currents in Unions

As we have repeatedly noticed in our study of these different unions, a radical preamble by no means indicates that all the members of the union subscribing to it have much idea of class consciousness or of the hoped-for co-operative commonwealth. Every union has conflicting currents within it making generalizations difficult. The radicalism of the United Brewery Workmen has been

diluted by the forcing in of many members who are not in sympathy with its original principles, and by cooperation with employers in the fight against prohibition which has tended to replace the feeling of solidarity with the working class by solidarity with all who uphold the liquor traffic. The United Mine Workers is dominated by a group of conservative national officials who have the support of the majority in the union on most issues, but it has a radical minority which has done much to bring the organization to its present stand on nationalization of the mines. The Western Federation of Miners, eschewing its early radicalism, has become decidedly conservative, but it also has a radical minority. This militant group, instead of bringing about progressive action on the part of the union or increasing the feeling of solidarity, has caused dissensions among the metal miners, who need sorely to stand together if they are to accomplish anything. In the Amalgamated Textile Workers we have seen that many members have little understanding in the principles of industrial unionism and little interest in the ideas expressed in their preamble. The garment unions are perhaps more uniformly Socialistic than most of the others, but even they have wide variations from conservatism to radicalism. A large part of the activity of these unions is directed toward securing the same immediate benefits that all organized labor seeks, and many join them for the sake of these immediate benefits rather than for any social theory. Nevertheless, the very fact that these organizations have proclaimed a belief in the possibility and necessity of a new industrial order in which the workers shall manage production for the service of the whole community, must do something to broaden the outlook of their members and make them more socially minded.

Democracy within the Unions

One of the most important characteristics of industrial unions is their effort to develop real democracy within their own organizations. This is particularly manifest among the newer unions which have revolted violently from the autocratic methods of the craft union official of the old type, but there are elements of it in practically all industrial unions. In the United Mine Workers the national officials still dominate to great extent, but there is a rising tide of protest against them and an increasing demand that more power be put in the hands of the rank and file. Their ability to appoint salaried organizers and thus build up a "machine" of loyal supporters, and their power to deal with various questions without consulting the membership, are helping to cause considerable restlessness in the union. The various insurgent strikes which have taken place in the last two or three years are an expression of this feeling that the wishes of the rank and file are being disregarded by the officials. In the Western Federation of Miners the radical minority has forced the nomination and election of officers by referendum vote instead of by vote of the convention, and has tried hard to stop the continued reelection of Moyer by urging that no officer serve for more than two consecutive terms. As a matter of fact, the constitution of the W. F. M. with its provisions for referendum and recall, now makes possible a large degree of democratic control in the organization, although the more radical groups continue to complain of Moyer's domination.

The Amalgamated Clothing Workers prides itself on the degree to which the rank and file determine the policies of the union. The system of shop committees and shop chairmen helps to keep the members alert and interested in the affairs of the organization, and the great mass meet-

ings which are called whenever an issue of importance arises give them an opportunity for discussion and expression of their opinions. Much the same thing is true of the Ladies' Garment Workers and the Cap Makers. The Amalgamated Textile Workers also has a large amount of democracy within the union, though in some centers the members are more prone to rely upon the judgment of their officials than in others. The Amalgamated Metal Workers puts special stress upon its freedom from official control. Its unpaid shop stewards who are elected by the workers in the different shops form district councils which have both legislative and executive control over their own districts. The stewards are thus even more influential than the shop chairmen of the garment unions and the textile, automobile, food, and tobacco workers. These unions are thus educating their members in the principles of democratic government, and, by making each one feel a sense of responsibility for the conduct of union affairs, they are helping to prepare them for larger responsibilities in the future.

Relation between Structure and Spirit of Industrial Unions

Is there any necessary connection between the various principles and policies which we have been discussing and the structure of the industrial union, we must next ask ourselves. It is conceivable that a union made up simply of the members of a single craft might be as democratic in its internal management as any industrial union, and might look forward as hopefully to the day when industry shall be owned and operated by the workers; and on the other hand, a union which includes all types of workers in an industry may wholly lack these characteristics. A form of organization, however, which seeks to unite all

kinds of workers in an industry regardless of their skill, race, or nationality, is more likely than the craft form to develop that sense of the value of each individual worker and of the interdependence of all workers which leads to increased democracy both in union affairs and in the control of production. All too often craft unions have been indifferent not only to the unskilled but also to negroes and foreigners, and have raised barriers in the way of high initiation fees to keep out workers who might otherwise belong, in order that members might maintain their own special privileges. Such narrow craft exclusiveness obviously is incompatible with any hope for industrial democracy. Where a sense of the solidarity of the whole working class and the hope for the ultimate control of industry by that class already exists, the industrial structure seems to be its natural expression.

Will Industrial Unionism Soon Supplant Craft Unionism?

If the workers are ever to take upon themselves the management of production, they will doubtless find a form of organization which unites all who are connected with the turning out of a certain product more adapted to their purposes than one which simply unites those engaged in one process or a limited number of processes. If workers' control is to succeed it is essential that all those who work together in one establishment should be united in such a way that they may meet and express their ideas about the management of that particular shop. Even those who most confidently predict such a change in the system of production do not expect it at once, however, so we must turn our attention now to the present tendencies in the American labor movement and consider whether the industrial form of organization is likely to supplant the craft

form in the immediate future. In concentrating upon industrial unions we must not forget that the craft union is still the prevailing type within the A. F. of L., which includes the great mass of organized workers in the country.

Reasons Why Industrial Structure Exists in Certain Unions

The reasons why certain unions have adopted the industrial rather than the craft form may perhaps shed some light on the question. The two mining unions have claimed and received jurisdiction over all who work in and around the coal and metal mines, partly because of the isolation of the mines and partly because relatively few of the workers would be eligible to other unions. They wished to make it impossible for the small groups who were not miners to shut down the mines and throw the mass of the workers out of employment. The United Brewery Workmen adopted this form for a quite different reason, for the brewers were few in comparison with other workers in the industry. They were scattered in many small establishments and so needed the support of the others. In their case, as in that of the Western Federation of Miners, a definite Socialist philosophy helped to make this form of organization attractive, but the conditions of the industry had a good deal to do with it. The garment unions adopted the industrial form partly because of their Socialist philosophy and partly because the differences in skill among the majority of the workers were comparatively slight so that it seemed natural for them to join in one union. The fact that they were for the most part scattered in small shops made it particularly necessary for all the workers to stand together. In the textile industry there are large numbers who are relatively

unskilled, so the industrial structure seemed a natural one there, also—though radical theories were an important factor in determining the form of the Amalgamated Textile Workers. The newer unions which have sprung up as rivals to older organizations tend to claim jurisdiction over all types of workers in their industries so that they may increase their membership as fast as possible and thus gain power. The practical advantage of so doing thus reinforces the class consciousness which many of them have.

Reasons Why Craft Unions Object to Industrial Structure

In the case of the strong craft unions of skilled workers which have existed for many years, the conditions are for the most part quite different. Not having been impelled for either practical or theoretical reasons to organize on an industrial basis in the first place, they are slow to desire a change in their form of association now. Their members fear that they would lose their strategic position if they opened their doors to all who work in the same industry with them. It is quite true that in many cases the skilled workers would be outvoted by the unskilled and would need to sacrifice some of their own privileges if they did so extend their jurisdiction. Furthermore, some workers, such as carpenters and machinists, may work in connection with many different industries, changing fairly rapidly from one to another. Having no essential connection with one more than with another, they are much more likely to wish union with others doing the same kind of work than with those who are engaged upon a particular product. In certain occupations the craft seems the more natural basis for organization; in others, the industry.

Increasing Tendency toward Federation and Amalgamation

As was pointed out in a previous chapter, however, many of the craft unions are tending to draw together in federations and in some cases are actually amalgamating. This process will probably continue until a large degree of cooperation between the different crafts of each industry and also between different industries is brought about. It may be that in all industries there will be an evolution such as Mr. Foster prophesies, from individual craft action to federation of crafts and then to amalgamation of all the crafts in each industry, and from federation of different industries to an amalgamation of all industries in one great organization of the working class. It is probable that the process will stop at the federation of industries, however, even if all craft divisions are broken down. The tendency is decidedly away from craft unionism of the original type, but the nature of certain industries is such that it is quite likely that they will not develop beyond the federation stage for a good while to come. There are various problems to be solved in connection with this development. Probably a double affiliation will be necessary for some workers, making it possible for them to unite with those of a certain industry in which they are temporarily working without losing membership in the craft organization which binds together all who do a particular type of work in connection with all industries. These problems, however, are no greater than the jurisdictional difficulties which are continually besetting organized labor.

Development of a Sense of Solidarity Essential to Industrial Unionism

Industrial unionism is likely to spread more through

this drawing together of existing craft bodies than it is through the forming of rival organizations which seek to supplant those already established. If a sense of solidarity is to be developed in the whole working class, it must first be developed within the unions which control the great majority of organized workers. These unions are firmly entrenched in the labor movement, and there is little indication that they are likely to be superseded by their rivals. A mere drawing together of the existing craft organization will not result in industrial unionism, however. A welcome must also be extended to the unskilled who are not yet organized. The development of a sense of solidarity among the workers is as slow and difficult as it is among other groups in society, and it will probably be a good while before the skilled crafts of the A. F. of L. are willing to recognize that their interests are bound up with those of the unskilled. The breakdown of distinctions between workers by means of the introduction of new machinery which reduces the skilled craftsmen to the level of the semi-skilled and tends to displace the unskilled altogether is hastening the process, but the spirit of craft independence is still strong in the American labor movement. Impatience with the slowness of this development will doubtless cause many new industrial unions to spring up outside the A. F. of L., but in the long run they will probably have less significance than the gradual transformation within the Federation.

The amalgamation of the different craft bodies and the inclusion of unskilled workers who had not hitherto been organized will not necessarily produce the social convictions that we have been describing, the loyalty to the whole working class and the belief in the future control of industry by that class, but it will help to pave the way for the spread of such ideas. As has already been pointed

out, the insistent demand for a voice in determining working conditions which is characteristic of all unions, whatever their structure or general philosophy, is part of the process of securing democratic control of industry. These unions in strengthening and broadening the scope of their organization will unconsciously be working toward the same ends which the more radical unions are definitely seeking, and will thus be taking part in a real social transformation. With the increase in power which will come from increased unity on the part of the workers, there will probably come a more widespread realization of the direction in which all of organized labor is moving.

Need of Recognizing the Social Idealism of the Industrial Unions

In bringing this study to a close, the writer must disclaim any intention of being dogmatic in interpretation of the facts presented or in prophesy about the future. The labor movement is a living and growing thing and new phases will continually be developed. Whether the aims of the industrial unionists of today will ever be realized completely is yet to be seen, but we cannot afford to ignore the fact that they held the loyalty and enthusiasm of thousands of organized workers. Whatever we may conclude as to the probable success of such an industrial system as these unions prophesy, we must not fail to recognize the idealism and real social passion that have inspired this high hope for an order where neither ownership of the means of production nor power over those engaged in it shall be concentrated in the hands of a few, and where industry shall be run primarily for the benefit of the community rather than for the profit of individuals.

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